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THE

LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

BY

THE REV. R. MILMAN.

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ae

So klammert sich der Schiffer endlich noch
Am Felsen fest, an dem er scheitern sollte.

GOETHE'S TASSO.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

INTRODUCTION.

In hazarding a new biography of Tasso, my object has been to represent his character, sometimes unjustly depreciated, in its true colours: to narrate the vicissitudes and trials he underwent, to trace their effect upon his mind, to shew the good purposes to which they were secretly, and mercifully, directed; and thus to exhibit one of those rare examples, when great genius and a vivid imagination, meeting with

disappointment and oppression, are still not hardened into misanthropy, and selfishness, but on the contrary, improved, and chastened in the ordeal through which they pass.

At the same time the changing, and restless course of Tasso's history, leading us from country to country, and city to city, conducting us into various and most opposite scenes, hurrying us to and fro from one extreme of life to the other, calling up before us in animated characters the school, the college, the court, the prison, the monastery, the palace, the amusements, shows, studies, spectacles, devotions, tyrannies, through which, as through an intricate labyrinth, we with difficulty follow the clue of his fortunes, will present us, I trust, with a lively delineation of Italian manners and feelings in the latter half of the famous sixteenth century.

It is said that of great authors, the best biography is their works. But Tasso's history is as striking and romantic as his poetry. The

materials also for it are unusually ample. The two chief sources are the works of Manso, and Serassi; and then as a continual corrective to both, his own voluminous writings in prose, and verse. There are several good sketches of his life in the various writers on Italian literature; Muratori, Tiraboschi, Ginguené, Sismondi, and others. There is in English, besides the short accounts prefixed to the translations of his "Jerusalem Delivered," and many able articles in Encyclopedias, and other works, a life of him in two volumes quarto by Dr. Black, of which I was not aware, when I first composed my own account. On referring to it, I found that while it was drawn in great measure, as all lives of Tasso must be, from much the same sources which I have enumerated, it yet took so different a view of his character, from that impressed in my own mind, and varied so much in many other ways, that I determined to finish my work, as I had undertaken it, especially as Ginguené and Sismondi, and Ranke, and Rosini,

whose works were, the first contemporary, the rest subsequent to Dr. Black's, seem all to bear out the idea which I had gathered. Rosini above all, Tasso's learned editor, in his Essay on the "Loves and Imprisonment of Tasso," appears to me to demonstrate with infinite research, and legal acumen, the truth of Tasso's noted attachment to Leonora, which Serassi, and after him Dr. Black call in question. The discovery of some verses of Tasso's in Rome, a little before Rosini wrote, in which Tasso's love is plainly and even coarsely described, establishes his conclusion almost, as he observes, to a certainty. If this fact be proved, the whole aspect of Tasso's misfortunes is at once changed. And on this theory, the tangled events of his biography seem to fall naturally and harmoniously into their places. On every other hypothesis, there is always something unaccounted for, and unaccountable.

Besides these prose works, Tasso has been the theme of Goldoni and Goethe in their

dramas, and of many other poets directly, and incidentally.

Of Tasso's principal compositions, in the writers already mentioned, in Schlegel, Hallam, and many others, most ample and eloquent criticisms may be found. It has therefore been my study to avoid all criticism, except when necessary for the disentanglement of the history, or the elucidation of my subject's character, and then I have condensed my observations, as far as I could consistently with clearness.

In the translations which I have ventured, I have confined myself to those poems, or rather those portions of poems, which were needed to throw light upon the narrative, or which, being least known, seemed the most striking evidences of Tasso's feelings or ability. I have translated them as exactly and literally as I could, sacrificing, I doubt not, elegance and harmony, to perspicuity and accuracy. When Sismondi describes the impossibility of translations equalling their originals, and the peculiar difficulty of

translating the Italian sonnets and canzoni, he supplies such adventurers as myself, with, I trust, sufficient excuses for our failures.

Of the two chief biographers of Tasso, Manso, Marquis della Villa, a Neapolitan nobleman, was a contemporary, and most intimate friend of Tasso, as the history will show. He was also in after times an intimate friend of our Milton, who has recorded their mutual affection and esteem in his beautiful Latin poem of Mansus. To Milton's stay with Manso at Naples during his Italian pilgrimage, to his conversations with him on the excellence and renown of Tasso, to his study with him of that poet's works in the midst of those beautiful scenes where several of them were composed, many authors have attributed the increase of Milton's poetic fervour, his partiality for Epic poetry, and perhaps for religious subjects, and even in some measure the conception of his "Paradise Lost," its metre, its ideas, its characteristic language. In a few of his shorter poems, the same original

might, perhaps, be traced, I should say with better reason. It is certainly a remarkable distinction for Manso, to have been so dear a friend to two such bards, and to have been so celebrated by them.

Manso wrote his life of Tasso some years after his death, and seems to have noted down somewhat at random all that he had heard, or could remember, of his friend. His work, therefore, is rather an imperfect memoir, than a regular biography. He may be best trusted as to what he saw himself, or heard from Tasso. He is less trustworthy in other matters, and is naturally inaccurate in his dates, and inconsequent in his narrative.

The Abate Serassi, a learned philologian and biographer of the last century, was intimately acquainted with the whole of Tasso's works, and every record of his career. His knowledge, if we except the recent discovery, was perfect, and accurate. In the arrangement, and chronology of the poet's life, he may be followed

without hesitation. But there were two feelings in his mind which biassed his judgment, and undermine his authority on some points. He was fond of contradicting Manso with, or without, reason. And secondly, as his work was dedicated to Maria Beatrice of Este, married to Ferdinand Archduke of Austria, in all that relates to the conduct of her ancestor Alfonso, or in any way concerns the honour of the d'Este family, he is unfaithful, and untrustworthy. The spirit of adulation was too much for his veracity. It entangles him in several palpable inconsistencies, and leads him, as Rosini thinks, to overlook, or suppress of set purpose, all documents, or allusions, which might in any way disgrace the princes of Ferrara.

"He has rather contradicted, than refuted facts," says Ginguené, "which could neither have been forged by Tasso, nor imagined by Manso."

I have not thought it needful to adduce the

quotations from the various sources which have been enumerated, as notes, in a narrative of this simple nature, seem for the most part out of place, and must either have been so sparing as to be unsatisfactory, or so voluminous, as to be cumbersome. Descriptions also of scenery, or of life, are of necessity gathered from so many various storehouses, sometimes from memory of the places, sometimes from indirect allusions, and incidental hints in prose and verse, that it would be scarcely possible to express them definitely even to one's own mind, much less make a catalogue of them intelligible to others, however correct the picture to which they contribute.

If this history shall warn any youth of the dangers which attend a vivid imagination, and the indulgence of its glittering day-dreams, of the sad consequences often entailed upon one sin, of the use and excellence of habits of perseverance, of the gracious ends and purposes of disappointment and affliction, of the value of

early devotion, often, even when lost amidst sin and vanity for a season, reappearing in the earnestness and depth of sincere repentance, and bearing, if late, yet blessed and abundant fruit, my labours will be a source to me of the deepest thankfulness.

CHAPTER I.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF BERNARDO TASSO.

CITIES have contended for the honour of having given Torquato Tasso to the world. The controversy, indeed, has not been, which was his birth-place, as in the famous tradition of old Homer, but which could claim him best, as having contributed most to the formation of such a genius. He was undoubtedly born in Sorrento. He received the first rudiments of instruction at Naples. His boyhood was disciplined in Rome. Bologna and Padua com-

pleted his education. Ferrara was the abode of his manhood, the theatre of his renown and misery. After his deliverance from captivity, city after city in vain offered him shelter and repose. He hovered for the most part during his last years between Naples and Rome, and found a brief refuge, and interval of rest in the latter city, before he died there. But as his family was of Bergamo, as his father was born there, and the eldest branches of his line dwelt there, he himself always regarded that city as his real country, and has celebrated it as such in some of his choicest poetry.

The biography of Tasso scarcely sounds like a real history; yet there are more abundant and authentic materials for it in his own writings, and the writings of his contemporaries, than perhaps for that of any other distinguished genius. In order, however, to catch the "uncertain and involved clue of his life's romantic and melancholy drama," it is necessary to review his father's almost as eventful career,

since it exercised, apparently, a decisive influence on his son's fortunes.

Bernardo Tasso, the father of Torquato, was born, as has been noticed, in Bergamo. The records of the family of the Tassi reach back as far as the twelfth century. They first occupied an estate named Almenno, on the river Brembo, situated about five miles from Bergamo. Afterwards, about the year A.D. 1200, on account of the wars which infested the country, they removed to a rocky point in the valley of the Brembo, where they reared a fortalice called Il Cornello. Here they seem to have increased in numbers and wealth, and became feudal lords. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, they descended into the city, and from thence branched out in different directions, rising to considerable eminence, and sending forth, as it were, colonies into most of the countries of Europe.

Their aggrandisement was owing to their invention, or rather, perhaps, re-establishment

of the system of posts, the Generalship of which they held in Italy, in Germany, in Flanders, and in Spain. Hence it was that they quartered a courier's horn in their armorial bearings, and hence the badger's skin, which the post-horses in old times carried on their frontlet; for Tasso signifies badger as well as yew. Omodeo de' Tassi is the first recorded name in their family stem, and the first inventor or re-establisher of "the Post."

His great grandson was Pasio, or Paxio, whose three children, Pietro, Giovanni, and Ruggero, were the first to settle in the city of Bergamo, and acquire distinction and renown. Ruggero was a favourite of the wise and learned Emperor Frederic III., in whose service he performed several important charges. From Maximilian I., who succeeded his father Frederic, A.D. 1493, Francesco, son of Ruggero, received as a feudal property the Generalship of the Posts of the Empire. This, being without children, he transmitted to his nephews and

their descendants, from one of whom, Leonardo, sprang the sovereign house of Taxis, in Germany.

Ruggero, brother of this Leonardo, was Provost and Chancellor of the University of Louvain, and on one occasion ambassador from Philip II. to the Roman Pontiff. Another brother, Gianbatista, was Comendatore of San Jago; and also ambassador from the Catholic King to the Court of France, and plenipotentiary at the Congress of Verona. A third Raimondo was Grand Courier of Spain, and settled at Valladolid, and became the parent of Giovanni, Knight of San Jago, Count of Villa Mediana, and ambassador in England, of Philip Commissary-general of the Crusade, then Archbishop of Granada, and of Pietro, captain of six thousand Spanish infantry in the Flemish wars.

A cousin, named Antonio, distinguished himself in the battle of Lepanto, in the attack on the Isola delle Gerbe, in the defence of the

citadel of Tunis, and finally in the battle of Gemblours, in the Netherlands. By these services, he obtained from Philip II. the "Generalship of the Post" at Rome, where he continued till the eightieth year of his age, when he died, leaving one son who became a Knight of Malta. Another of the Tassi was "General of the Post" in the Tyrol, one of whose sons, Giambatista, acquired great renown in the same Flemish campaigns; and who, when Lieutenant-general of the Imperial army in Holland, was killed by a musket-ball at the siege of Bonn, in the year 1588.

The eldest line of this noble family remained in Italy at Bergamo, distinguished for their love of arts and literature, and not without military reputation also. At the same time, several members of this branch likewise carried on the great family pursuit. Thus Agostino, grandson of Pietro, Ruggero's eldest brother, was "General of the Post" under the Popes, Alexander VI. and Julius II., whose son,

Gabriel, held the same office under Leo X. His children, Giovanni Jacopo, Count and Cavalier, and Cristoforo, Knight of San Jago, were remarkable, the former in Bergamo for the splendor of his life, and the magnificence of his buildings, and the other in Rome for his virtue as a Prelate, his literary attainments, and his friendship with the celebrated Cardinal Bembo. These two noblemen, with the younger sons of Agostino, their grandfather, Pier Andrea de' Tassi, the Cavaliere Domenico, and Monsignor Luigi, Bishop, first of Parenzo, and then of Recanati and Macerata, were the nearest relations of Bernardo, who calls them cousins, he being the son of Gabriel, and the grandson of Giovanni, Agostino's brother.

The spread of this family over the Imperial dominions, their talents, and in general their success and prosperity are singular and remarkable; and the family pride discernible in Torquato, and in part, most probably, a cause of his misfortunes, is by no means unnatural,

when we consider the distinction to which the younger branches of his race had risen, and the state of dependance and poverty in which he was obliged to live: for Bernardo Tasso, though he had more than a full share of the hereditary capacity for literature, for business, and for war, by no means participated in the hereditary prosperity of his relatives; and the ill-fortune which attended him, settled more heavily on his son Torquato.

He was left an orphan very young by the death of his father Gabriel, with the burden of two little sisters, Laura and Bordelisia. The Cavaliere Domenico and the Bishop of Recanati, his nearest relations, took charge of this bereaved family, and provided for the education and settlement of the girls, and for the studies and advancement of Bernardo, who already gave manifest tokens of that happy talent and sound judgment, which so distinguished him in after years.

Lucia in due time was married to Alessandro

da Spilimbergo, one of the principal families in Friuli. Bordelisia embraced the monastic profession, and entered under the name of Sister Afra into the Benedictine convent of Sta. Grata, in Bergamo. If the Bishop of Recanati, who seems to have had especial charge of Bernardo, had lived, the young man would probably have started in the world with much fairer prospects. But in September, A.D. 1520, that prelate was barbarously murdered at his Villa di Redona, by four robbers, who carried off money and property to the amount of eight thousand ducats. Thus Bernardo remained, as it were, a second time orphan, and as it appears, in very narrow circumstances. He contrived, however, though with difficulty, to find the means of entering the University of Padua, and of completing his studies under the learned professors, and amidst the excellent literary society which at this period abounded in that city.

He had indeed already enjoyed considerable

advantages, and made great proficiency in Latin and Greek before he left Bergamo, having had for instructors there the famous Giambatista Pio, and the no less famous Demetrius Calcondyles, who with many honours, and large salaries, were retained for some years in Bergamo as teachers, the former chiefly of Latin, the latter of Greek literature. He accordingly rose rapidly at Padua into reputation as a scholar; but distinguished himself still more by the elegance of his Italian compositions, both in prose and verse. At the same time he applied himself, even more diligently, to the study of the graver sciences, and particularly of moral and political philosophy, as preparing himself for employment in some one of the many sovereign courts, which were at this time to be found in Italy.

It was at Padua that he conciliated the esteem and friendship of the celebrated Bembo, who indeed had some family acquaintance with him before; for the father of Bembo had

been Podestà in Bergamo, and his son, when growing into manhood, had lived two years with him in that place, and thus became intimate with the Tassi, who, as has been said, were among the most distinguished citizens. Bembo indeed always retained a great affection for Bergamo, as he himself affirms in reply to its citizens, when they requested him to take up his residence among them, on his appointment by Paul III. to be their Bishop.

Perhaps it was through Bembo that Bernardo obtained his first employment. That eminent scholar had been Prothonotary at Rome; and though at the time of Bernardo's residence at Padua he had retired to that city, he maintained his influence in his former residence, whither he was recalled on his exaltation to the Cardinalate; and from Rome came Bernardo's first invitation. Guido Rangone, General of the Church, took him into his service about the year 1524, and becoming acquainted with his talents, occupied him in several important and

difficult commissions. Under him Bernardo was present at the Battle of Pavia. He then became an attendant of Renée, of France, lately married to Ercole II. d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. About two years later, toward the end of 1531, he was selected for chief secretary by Ferrante Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno, the first nobleman in the kingdom of Naples, renowned for his magnanimity and valour, a great patron of literature and the arts, and himself a not inconsiderable proficient.

This post Bernardo filled for three and twenty years beloved and cherished, with the exception of one short interval, by the Prince and his wife, Donna Isabella Villamarina, a beautiful and learned lady. He had previously in A.D. 1531 published some of his poetry at Venice. He now produced a reprint in the same city with the addition of a Second Book. In many of his sonnets, he celebrates his patrons with the usual elegant flattery. He presented the volume to them, with a preface addressed

to the Prince, and a dedication of the Second Book to Donna Isabella, expressive of his great affection and gratitude.

He presently accompanied his lord to Africa, when he attended Charles V. on his famous expedition to abolish piracy, and restore Muley Hascem to the throne of Tunis, from whence he had been expelled by Barbarossa. This enterprise was crowned with the fullest success; Barbarossa being signally defeated at the head of sixty thousand Moors and Turks; and Tunis, after a short siege, taken by storm. The numerous fleet which had so long harassed, and wasted the coasts of Italy, and indeed of the whole Mediterranean, was destroyed; twenty thousand captives delivered from miserable slavery with the infidel, and furnished and clothed by the charity of the Emperor, and sent back by him to their several homes, diffused his renown over the whole of Europe, and raised him, as Robertson has remarked, to his culminating

pinnacle of glory. It was at this siege, that Bernardo, among other spoils, obtained that beautiful vessel, originally intended for perfumes, but which he converted into an inkstand, which Torquato inherited from him, and celebrated in the following sonnet, and a second resembling it.

This, once a box of precious odours rare,
Now vase of flowing ink, amidst the spoil
Which he acquir'd on Afric's fiery soil,
My good sire from the Moor in triumph tare,
And to this fair use turn'd—His amorous care.
With it he sang, firm faith, and ceaseless moil;
Nor without it proclaim'd the arms, the toil,

Of mighty Charles, and of his happy heir.
It o'er the Alps, and Ardenne's wood of song,
Exil'd he bore, and dying, to me left,
Dear, sad memorial! This, 'mid all her wrong,
Gualengo! Fortune hath not from me reft.
And when I chaunt Alfonso great and wise,
Oh! may it aye my weary pen suffice!

Bernardo distinguished himself in this expedition for the valour and activity hereditary in

his family, and acquired fresh favour and an increase of salary from his patrons in return. He was then sent on a commission of importance into Spain, on his return from which country, he stopped several months at Venice. Here he published at this time the third book of his "Amori," with the famous stanzas to Giulia Gonzaga, and the story of Hero and Leander, freely paraphrased from Musæus. On his arrival at Salerno, he found fresh favours still, both in kindness and money, awaiting him; and in order wholly to attach such a useful and accomplished servant, his patrons induced him to marry. The spouse whom they proposed to him was Porzia, daughter of Giacomo de' Rossi surnamed of Pistoia, from which city the family had been expelled, and settled in the Neapolitan territories. Giacomo's wife was Lucrezia de Gambacorti, once Lords of Pisa, and then Marquesses of Celenza. Both, therefore, were of high origin, and Bernardo was introduced among

further noble connections by his marriage; for Hippolita, Porzia's sister, was wedded, first to Onofro Correale de' Coenti di Terra Nova, and afterwards to Giambatista Caraffa, distinguished not only for high birth, but also for the History of Naples which he wrote, while Diana, sister of his mother-in-law, was married to Giambatista Caraccioli, from whom sprang many noblemen and princes, and whose descendant, the Prince Caraccioli, has obtained such an unfortunate celebrity in our English annals.

It was at this time that Bernardo's favour and fortune provoked, as was natural, the envy of his fellow-courtiers. They traduced him successfully to Don Ferrante. It was, however, but a passing cloud, as the Prince immediately discovered the falsehood of the charges brought against his secretary, and recompensed him presently with renewed affection, and additional remuneration for his transitory disgrace. Bernardo, however, whether in consequence of this

trial, or for other reasons, transferred his residence, about this period, from Salerno to Sorrento, purposing to enjoy the quiet and beauty of that town and its vicinity, and there to compose his great poem of Amadigi, or Amadis of Gaul, as we name him, which he had undertaken at the persuasion of his patron, and Don Luigi d'Avila, and other noblemen of the Imperial Court.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF TORQUATO TASSO.

SORRENTO is situated in the Bay of Naples, to the south-west of that city, at the base of that spur of the Apennines which projects between the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno. "It is so pleasant and delightful," says Bernardo, "that the poets feigned it to be the dwelling of the sirens. This allegory alone would demonstrate its beauty. Its delights, however, are not those which entangle the mind in vice and luxury, but such as tend to the health and pleasure of mind and body together." "A

most sweet abode is it," says Manso, "especially for the Muses; for the verdure of the leaves, the shade of the trees, the continual fanning of soft airs, the freshness of the clear waters which spring in the retiring valleys and hanging hills, the fertility of the opening plains, the serenity of the sky, the tranquillity of the sea, where the fishes, and the birds, and the savoury fruits, appear to rival one another in abundance and variety, when thus appealing in one harmony to the eye and to the mind, frame indeed a great and marvellous garden," such as poets have assigned to Falerina, Alcina, or Armida. A narrow plain spreads out toward the north, rich and fruitful to a proverb, containing corn-fields and vineyards, interspersed with stately clumps of pines and other trees. The mountain of Santa Agata shuts this round, sloping rapidly in one part down to the very walls. The town itself, besides a cluster of houses round the cathedral, is chiefly a succession of villas, running along the bay on steep, pre-

cipitous rocks of considerable height. The edifices are bosomed in groves of myrtles and oranges, where the perfume of the flowers, and the songs of the nightingales are said to be sweeter than anywhere else in Italy. Chestnut and ilex woods rise behind, clothing the bases and sides of the mountainous amphitheatre with dense and deep foliage. Streams sparkle here and there through the shade, some gliding in the valleys, some tumbling down the hills, the former appearing as if lingering amid the charms of the fair land, the latter as if hastening toward the lovely sea, which reflects the impending cliffs in its deep, sheltered calm. Hollowed along their base are natural grottos and baths, true caves of the nymphs, some square, and some round, and some paved with red, some with yellow, others with silver sand, but all translucent and sparkling, and contrasting marvellously with the deep blue waters outside.

Amongst these villas, and overhanging the

bay, next to the church of San Francesco, still stands the house of Tasso. For here Bernardo, as he tells us, "recalled to his studies, his mind, which had so long been wandering on from one affair to another, as a bird from branch to branch;" and here, on the eve of St. Gregory, the 11th of March, A.D. 1544, when the sun was in its highest meridian, Torquato was born. They show the palace and chamber still, although some envious persons have affirmed, that the part of the house where the room was really situated, has been undermined by the waves, and fallen in.

Bernardo had had one son before, born at Salerno, who died in infancy, and one daughter, named Cornelia. At the birth of Torquato he could not be present, having to attend his patron in the war between the Emperor and Francis I., lately revived in Piedmont. He gave directions, however, that prayers should be offered up in several religious houses for his offspring, and that if a male child were

granted to him, Ernando de Torres, a noble cavalier, and author both in Latin and Italian, should stand sponsor at his baptism. He was baptised accordingly in the Archiepiscopal church at Sorrento, and there received the name of Torquato, the same that had been given to his dead brother, and which he was to advance as high, says Serassi, awkwardly enough, by his famous poem, as the ancient Manlius by his military valour.

Meanwhile, the father was lamenting his renewed entanglement in the business and troubles of the world, and not without reason. Charles V., after his most disastrous expedition against Algiers, in which he lost the greater part of his fleet and army, and exhausted his pecuniary resources, and received far greater detriment than he had gained advantage by his first African enterprise, had irritated his rival Francis with the strongest possible provocations. He had outwitted him, by obtaining his leave to pass through France

on his way to subdue the rebellion of Ghent, and then refusing to confirm him in the Duchy of Milan, as he had led him to suppose he would. His General, in Lombardy, the Marquis del Guasto, had also, it is supposed, with Charles' privity, intercepted and murdered Rincon and the Genoese exile, Fregoso, Francis' envoys to Venice, on their way down the Po, for which cruel infringement of the law of nations, the Emperor refused any real satisfaction. During, A.D. 1543, the war was carried on in different directions, without any decisive advantage, or general engagement. In the winter, the Emperor succeeded in forming a combination of the principal European powers against the French monarch. In order to anticipate the effects of this league, Francis, very early in the spring of A.D. 1544, dispatched a strong force, under the young Duke d'Enguien, into Montferrat. His first step was to invest Carignano, a place which the Marquis del Guasto had taken and strongly

fortified the previous year. This led to the battle of Cerisoles, or Ceresola, in which the Imperialists under del Guasto were signally defeated, losing ten thousand men, and all their tents, baggage, and artillery, with very little loss on the part of the French. Bernardo served under his patron in this disastrous engagement, to whose courage and conduct the Spaniards were indebted for the salvation of the scattered remnant of their forces. Francis was prevented from following up this splendid victory in Lombardy, by the danger of his opposite frontier, which the Emperor threatened in union with Henry VIII. of England. Accordingly the war languished on in the Milanese, without any serious results on either side, while Bernardo, still in attendance on his patron, followed the Imperial Court into Flanders. Thence he returned with the Prince in the ensuing winter to the kingdom of Naples, and in January, A.D. 1545, found his Porzia with her infant child at Sorrento, expecting

to reap in their embraces the repose after which he had been yearning. It was natural that he should desire it, as he was now fifty-two years of age, had passed through a sufficiency of adventures in his youth and manhood, was in possession of wealth and honour, had a beautiful, young, and most affectionate wife, and a daughter resembling her in every point, and now a young son of ten months old, a marvel and prodigy already, if the accounts which are given of him can be trusted.

"Scarcely," says Manso, "had he completed his sixth month, when, beyond what is usual with children, he began not merely to move his tongue, but even to speak. Neither was he ever perceived to stammer as children do; but from the first he formed entire words, and enounced them properly, and, which exceeds human belief, with a meaning corresponding to the questions addressed him, or to the thoughts which he was desirous of expressing. And, (overwhelming authority!) I was told by those

who had heard it directly from his nurse, that nothing childish was ever observed in his words, except the delicacy of his infantine voice. Wherefore, it may, without suspicion of falsehood, be affirmed, that on his tongue words came before stammerings, and in his words meaning before sound. Another as great, or perhaps greater marvel, I can adduce, on the testimony of most veracious witnesses, that Torquato in his babyhood was never seen to smile as other children do, and seldom even to cry. Moreover, he never gave occasion, in anything that he did, to father, or nurse, or even his masters, to chastise him or correct him for any disorderly behaviour, or to urge him toward learning any of the lessons which they taught him."

Thus, at Sorrento, and afterwards at Salerno, whither he removed for the convenience of his patron, in pleasant repose, in the society of his affectionate wife, tender daughter, and wonderful son, and in the continuation of his interminable poem, two years of Bernardo's life ran

peaceably away. It was not, however, ordained that his quiet should be of long continuance. As from the event which occasioned its disruption flowed all the troubles and trials which overclouded the rest of Bernardo's life, and as their consequence was the straitened circumstances and dependant condition, whence Torquato's heavier afflictions resulted, it seems necessary to narrate it more at length than otherwise would have been required.

Early in A.D. 1547, Don Pedro of Toledo, Viceroy of Naples, under Charles V., endeavoured to introduce the Inquisition, as it existed in Spain, into the Neapolitan dominions. Don Pedro was a distinguished soldier and subtle politician, but obstinate, crafty, and ambitious. He was also ill-disposed toward the noblemen of the country, and desirous of reducing them into complete subjection. His pretence for establishing the odious tribunal, was the prevention of the errors, as he called them, which were now disseminating themselves in

Germany. His secret object, the Neapolitans imagined, was, under the cloak of religion, to revenge himself on those whom he disliked, and terrify the rest into unhesitating obedience. He had previously obtained the Emperor's consent, and through the Cardinal of Burgos, his brother, had requested, and by means of the Cardinal Caraffa at last, with great difficulty persuaded Pope Paul III., a wise and pious pontiff, to grant the necessary powers from Rome. He kept these proceedings as secret as he could, but was unable to prevent rumours of them from reaching Naples. The people and nobility immediately commissioned deputies to expostulate with the Viceroy, who, at the time, was at Pozzuolo. He, at first, dissembled his purpose, protesting that he would proceed against the disseminators of heresy by the usual canonical regulations. But before many days, an edict was fixed on the gates of the cathedral, announcing the establishment of the Inquisition. The people rose tumultuously,

and one of their leaders pulled the edict down, and tore it in pieces. Toledo hastened into Naples, and when fresh deputies were sent to appease him, answered at first only with threats and reproaches. Then returning to his customary dissimulation, he despatched a message by one of the Neapolitan nobility, declaring that since the repugnance of the city to this tribunal was so great, he would speak no more of its establishment.

All of a sudden, whether changing his mind from passion, or supposing that the people might easily be terrified, he sent out some of his Spanish troops, with orders to disperse the mutineers, to plunder their houses, and put their chiefs to death. The soldiers were thus advancing, robbing and massacring as they went, when the tocsin rang on the bell-tower of San Lorenzo, and the populace closing their shops ran suddenly to arms, and attacked, and routed the Spaniards. In the meanwhile, the artillery kept firing from the castles, so that the whole

city was full of confusion and destruction. How far the ruin would have gone, it would be difficult to say, if night had not interrupted the bombardment and the tumult. On the following morning, as neither the Viceroy nor the Neapolitans would give way, preparations for resistance were renewed on both sides. At the same time, the leaders of both nobles and people meeting in the council-room of San Lorenzo, resolved to send deputies to the Emperor to justify their insurrection, and complain of the Viceroy's violence, and his attack upon the city. They elected as their envoys the Prince of Salerno, as the first nobleman of the kingdom, for the nobility; and for the people Don Placido Sangro, who also on the return of the Prince, was to remain as ordinary ambassador for the city at the Imperial Court. Sanseverino, after some deliberation in which Bernardo Tasso, as his son informs us, had a principal share, undertook the embassy, not insensible of the risk with which it was attended, but urged to it

by patriotism, and the desire of glory, and perhaps by dislike of Toledo. He had an interview with the Viceroy, who with his usual craft represented to him, that if the object of his mission was only to obtain the withdrawal of the Inquisition, it was needless, as before taking any further steps, he would consult the Emperor on the subject; if, on the other hand, it was to accuse him, that he confided in his conscience, and the Emperor's equity. Sanseverino was not to be dissuaded. The offer, however, served Toledo for a ground of accusation against him afterwards, which seems to have been his purpose in making it. The two deputies started for Germany, but were guilty of that which is the greatest imprudence in such affairs, namely of lingering on the way. Accordingly Don Pedro Gonzales di Mendoça, dispatched in haste by the Viceroy, reached Charles at Nuremberg some days before their arrival, and having the opportunity of telling his story first, biassed the Emperor's mind against

both the justifications and accusations of the Neapolitan envoys.

Sanseverino, therefore, notwithstanding his rank and faithful services, and his near relationship to the Emperor (for his mother was Maria of Aragon, niece of Ferdinand the Catholic, Charles' grandfather) was received with great coldness, and could not obtain admission to the monarch, while at the same time he was forbidden to leave the Court. Sangro, on the other hand, though equally refused admission, was commanded to depart forthwith without it. However, on his boldly insisting upon presentation with the Bishop of Arras, afterwards Cardinal of Granville, Charles' chief minister, he was permitted to appear, and discharge his commission, but was then immediately ordered to return, and exhort his fellow-citizens to lay down their arms, and submit for the future to the Emperor's representative. Sangro hastened back with this harsh message, which, with the delegates of the people, he endeavoured to soften

as much as possible in communicating. But when the Viceroy's first order was, that all the inhabitants should surrender their arms, a new tumult broke out, and the populace complaining that they were betrayed by their own officers, began to fire at the council-room, where their delegates were sitting. They were, however, appeased by the Prior of Capua, a favourite with them; and after the humour of mobs, especially of Italian mobs, changing all at once from furious resistance to abject compliance, they laded all their weapons and artillery on several country carts, which they seized upon for the purpose, and drew them with their own hands to the castle, and gave them up freely to the Viceroy. On the same day, the delegates publicly promised obedience in the name of the city. Toledo made a favourable answer to their acknowledgments, and, three days afterwards, published a general amnesty for all, except the chiefs of the insurrection, on whom, to the number of twenty, sentence of death was passed,

from which, however, the greater part saved themselves by voluntary expatriation.

Sanseverino, in the meanwhile, remained at the Imperial Court, very discontented with his situation, and with this unconditional surrender of the artillery and privileges of the city. Having much interest among Charles' courtiers, he laboured incessantly to persuade the Emperor, through them, to send some special minister, who might inquire impartially into the whole business; and to assist himself in these labours, he summoned Bernardo Tasso to his side, as experienced and successful in political affairs. Bernardo accordingly departed very unwillingly from Salerno, committing the education and care of Torquato to his mother, and Giovanni d'Andeluzzo, an excellent and learned priest, whom he had kept with him as chaplain for several years. He reached Augsburg, whither the Court had removed, in perfect safety, about the end of October. On his arrival, he renewed several old intimacies with different

courtiers, and acquired the good graces of the Bishop of Arras, whose authority in the Imperial counsels made his support of paramount importance. By their instrumentality, Sanseverino first procured the despatch of the Bishop of Meudan as arbiter to Naples. Toledo, however, prevailed upon him by flatteries and intrigues to decide altogether in his favour. A second embassy was sent by the Neapolitans, who brought many heavy accusations against the Viceroy of presumption, and ambition, of striking medals to his own honour, and coining money, accusations overlooked at the time, but remembered afterwards to his cost. At last, they obtained a promise of a general pardon for the city, and the restitution of its artillery, and its privileges. The fulfilment, however, of this engagement was continually put off with the usual dilatoriness of the Imperial Court. Bernardo lamented this delay, in letters to his wife and to d'Andeluzzo; and strove hard, though in vain, to turn it to account by procuring the Im-

perial confirmation of certain allowances which the Prince had made him, and which he held as fiefs. At last, Sanseverino obtained the execution of the promise, on Charles' usual condition; that the city should pay a fine of a hundred thousand ducats. Thus after a year's attendance and humiliation, he at length received permission to return home, with directions, however, that he should not any more interfere in public affairs, for fear of clashing with the Viceroy.

Naples received him with universal acclamations. Eight hundred cavaliers attended him on the visit of outward friendship, and secret triumph, which he paid Toledo. The streets were crowded with applauding multitudes when he left his presence. It is needless to describe the violent resentment thus kindled in the jealous Spaniard's mind, which was further inflamed by some incautious words which Sanseverino let fall, hinting at the probable removal of his rival. Toledo, however, dissembled his

rage, and waited his opportunity of vengeance. First it was pretended that the Imperial Treasury had claims on the customs of Salerno, and proceedings accordingly were commenced. Then the Count di Castro, Grand Chancellor of the kingdom, was persuaded to contend for precedence over the Prince, in right of his office, a dispute which Sanseverino eluded by an artifice.

More violent measures were then employed. Don Garzia di Toledo, the Viceroy's son, prevailed on Tommaso di Ruggero, a captain in the Neapolitan infantry at the siege of Tripoli, to undertake the assassination of his father's enemy. Tommaso engaged his brother, Persio, half-witted, but a celebrated marksman, to accomplish this horrible project, persuading him that Sanseverino's death was, in some way, necessary for the honour of their house.

The attempt was made as the Prince was riding from Naples to Salerno, out of a thicket which overhung the road; but from a fortunate

stumble of his horse, Sanseverino was only wounded above the knee. Persio was seized, but refused to make any confession. Being thrown into prison, he wrote a letter to the Viceroy, who was immediately suspected of being privy to the intended crime. He, of course, denied it in the strongest terms. Persio was put to the rack, and under torture declared that his brother had urged him to the deed for "the honour of their house." This Tommaso, when confronted with the criminal, denied, attributing the attempt to the capricious humour of a madman. Sanseverino claimed the surrender of both the culprits, as his vassals: this was refused; and the demand, which he then made for their public punishment, was evaded. Instead of giving him satisfaction, Toledo kept threatening him with accusations of heresy, of rebellion, of succours given to the exiles of Naples, shewing ardently a settled purpose in some way or other to compass his ruin. Nothing seemed left, except to quit the Neapolitan

territories altogether: on this Sanseverino resolved, with a real or professed intention of carrying his complaints to the Emperor. Bernardo agreed in recommending this step, and foreseeing that, if he accompanied his patron, his absence might be long, he hastened to settle his wife and her children in the Palazzo de' Gambacorti, at Naples, that she might be near her mother, and other relatives, and enjoy more advantages for the education of her children. The Prince, his patron, hurried his departure, fearing perhaps immediate arrest, from which, according to one account, he escaped secretly; according to another, he left the kingdom openly. No sooner, however, had he escaped, than he began to discuss the expediency of quitting the Emperor's thankless service, and attaching himself to the King of France. From this step Bernardo dissuaded him with all his power. It was urged upon him at Venice, where he made some stay, by several Neapolitan

exiles, whom he met there. Torquato has recorded the arguments on each side in one of his dialogues. His hesitation remaining, he despatched a messenger to the imperial court, to request a safe conduct on the Emperor's word, and Charles replied carelessly, that he might come if he chose. On receiving this harsh answer, Sanseverino returned to Venice, and after much deliberation with the exiles, and the French Ambassador, at last declared openly for Henry II.; and sent Bernardo as his representative to that monarch, to concert all necessary movements with him for the intended invasion of Naples.

As soon as the tidings of Sanseverino's defection were public, the Viceroy, rejoicing in the success of his schemes, hastened to proclaim his rival, with all his followers, rebels against their lawful sovereign. Bernardo was unwilling to change parties, which, for the most part, men changed as easily as their glove at this period

in Italy. He owed, indeed, no allegiance to Charles, but was connected with the Imperialists by many ties of affection and friendship, and many past services. Nevertheless, his gratitude and attachment to Sanseverino, and his consort, were so great, that he resolved to partake their adversities and trials, as he had shared their prosperity and wealth. He, therefore, with the rest, was proclaimed a rebel by Toledo, and all his property in the Neapolitan territories immediately confiscated. He proceeded then, as we remarked, to the French court to arrange the terms of the agreement between it and his patron. The conditions which he obtained were these: His most Christian Majesty declared Sanseverino Captain-General of the invasion of Naples, on the favourable termination of which, he was to remain there as viceroy. Meanwhile five-and-twenty thousand ducats were to be paid him monthly, and he received for life the government of Tarascon and Belcairs, territories

upon the Rhone. The King also promised to make provision for all his gentlemen, and especially to settle some office on Bernardo, as soon as the conquest of the kingdom should be accomplished. The plan of attack proposed was, that Solyman the Magnificent, the Turkish Sultan, Henry's chief ally at this time, should send a large fleet, which the Prince of Salerno should join off Ischia with some French ships. The united force was immediately to effect a landing at Naples, where it was expected that the partisans of Sanseverino, if not the whole of the people, would rise at once against their Spanish masters. Previous to the enterprise, Bernardo was despatched again to the Parisian court to take care of his patron's interests. He visited Bergamo, his native city upon the way, where he was detained some time by sickness. Consequently before he reached Paris, he received the tidings that Sanseverino's undertaking had failed. Dragut, the Turkish Admiral,

scarcely inferior in reputation to his predecessor and instructor, the famous Corsair Barbarossa, arrived at the Bay of Naples with a hundred-and-twenty ships at the appointed time. The French succours not appearing, according to the agreement, the Pasha was induced, by the treachery of Cesar Mormile, to sail away without waiting.

Sanseverino arrived on the 18th of August, and found the Turkish fleet gone. And though he made all haste to overtake it, he could not, by any power of eloquence, persuade Dragut to return with him. He was, therefore, obliged to sail in his company to Constantinople, where hopes were held out to him that Solyman would again undertake the expedition in concert with him in the ensuing spring.

Meanwhile Bernardo was very busy in Paris, stirring up the dilatory monarch with all his power, in prose and in verse, to renew the attempt on Naples, and celebrating in rivalry with Ron-

sard, and all the most renowned poets of the day, both Italian and French, the beauty and charms of Margaret de Valois, the King's sister, married subsequently to Emanuel Philibert, of Savoy. Unfortunately, however, for his cause, neither by his political skill, nor by the elegance of his flattery, nor by the sweetness of his poetry, could he inflame Henry and his court with sufficient ardour to carry out the proposed enterprise effectually. The fervour which the famous defence of Metz, and the subsequent dissolution of the Imperial army, and the other successes in Germany and Italy, which in A.D. 1552 so reduced Charles' power, had awakened in the rival monarch, speedily evaporated amidst the amusements and occupations of his court. The capture also of Terouane and Hesdin, and the war in the Low Countries, fixed Henry's attention on that side of his dominions. Accordingly when the Prince of Salerno returned in the spring to re-form his enterprise, between

the delays of the Turkish Sultan, and the negligence of the French monarch, nothing serious could be effected.

While hopes of an attack upon Naples were yet entertained, Bernardo had laboured to provide for the departure of his wife and family from that city, which, however, her relatives would not permit. When all prospect of restoration seemed vanishing, and the Prince left Paris for Italy in disgust and despondency, Bernardo could only comfort himself by continuing his 'Amadigi,' and striving by renewed compliments and sonnets, to win some substantial favour from the court where he was residing. Finding these endeavours ineffectual, and receiving poor accounts of his wife and children's health, he requested his patron's leave to give up his situation, and to return to Rome, whither he hoped that his Porzia, with his son and daughter, might be able to escape. He delayed his departure from Paris some few months, as the arrival of the Cardinal of

Tournon, and his follower, Vincenzio Laureo, a celebrated scholar and theologian, and afterwards himself a Cardinal, and a particular friend of Bernardo's, buoyed him up with fresh hopes. Who does not know the issue of such dreams? Who does not know how readily men are deceived by them? Who does not know Dante's bitter lamentation over a similar lot?

Then shalt thou prove how salt a stranger's bread;
How hard a path, still up and down to tread
A stranger's stairs; and heaviest load of all
Shall be the company, where thou shalt fall,
Spiteful and evil, in this vale of shame,
All mad, ungrateful, impious, 'gainst thy name.*

* Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
Lo scendere e 'l salire per l'altrui scale.
E quel che più ti graverà le spalle
Sarà la compagnia malvagia, e scempia,
Con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle;
Chi tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
Si farà contra te.

DANTE, PARADISO, CANT. XVII.

At length, however, finding this further delay equally fruitless, the baffled poet and politician retired in despair, and settled himself, as he had proposed, at Rome, retaining a salary of three hundred golden crowns from his former patron, of which, however, he received but little. He obtained, with some difficulty, permission of residence from Julius III., as the Neapolitan exiles were mostly expelled from the city, through the prevalence, at that time, of the Imperial interest in the Papal court. The Cardinal Ippolito II. d'Este gave him apartments in the Palazzo di Monte Giordano, and there, being fixed in tolerable comfort, he recommenced his labours to procure a re-union with his beloved family.

CHAPTER III.

WANDERINGS OF BERNARDO TASSO.

During these fruitless expeditions of his father, Torquato had been fulfilling in his childhood the marvellous promise of his infancy. After his mother had brought him to Naples, his education was superintended by his tutor, Don Angeluzzo, under whom, when he was six years old, he had already mastered the rudiments of Latin. At this time, the Jesuits, whose society had lately been established by Paul III., after much debate and hesitation, opened at Naples, as was their custom every-

where, a small church, with schools for different classes of children attached to it, in a street near the Palazzo de' Gambacorti, and therefore convenient for young Tasso's attendance. For young children, their system was admirably adapted, however narrow and mind-repressing afterwards. Under their tuition Torquato's progress was astonishing. His ardour and diligence were almost incredible. He never let the day surprise him in bed. Often he rose up while it was yet deep night. His mother had even to provide torches for him, that he might arrive at the very early hour when the fathers commenced instruction. He began his attendance at this school in A.D. 1551, directly after it was opened. During the three years that he remained in it, he became a good Latin scholar, made some proficiency in Greek, and acquired such readiness in speaking and writing, both in prose and verse, that at ten years old he publicly recited some of his com-

positions in both, to the amazement of those who heard him. Here also, by his mother's watchfulness, and the care of his teachers, his mind seems to have been imbued with that strong religious tone, which, though choked for a season under the temptations of youth, and ambition, and the love of glory, still never, as it appears, was altogether fruitless, and which afterwards, under God's blessing, became his support in the overwhelming afflictions through which he passed, was his one stay in the restlessness and despondency which those afflictions naturally left behind, and being purified, and if we may dare say so, perfected through suffering, brought him repose and quiet at his end, and a happy departure after his many miseries. Writing, many years afterwards, to Jacopo Buoncompagno, General of the Church, to ask for his intercession with the Duke of Ferrara, in his letter from the hospital of Santa Anna, he recalls the first communion to which

he was taken by his teachers, and describes it as having made an ineffaceable impression upon his mind. He was, he tells us, at the time scarcely nine years old in reality, but so forward, both in body and mind, as to be equal to a boy of twelve or thirteen. Without fully understanding the mystery, he yet participated, he assures us, with the deepest devotion and joy; and remembering, he adds, my sensations at the time, I now feel confident, that I then received into this earthly body of mine the Son of God, who deigned to show in me the marvels of His working, because He beheld me receive them, *i. e.* the elements, into a dwelling-place, yet uncontaminated, simple, and pure.

Bernardo was unable to execute his intention of reuniting his wife and children to himself, at Rome. His wife's brothers and relations would not pay her dower. She could not well take steps to recover it, as her husband was a

proclaimed rebel. He seems to have been unwilling to surrender that last wreck of his fortune. Her family also appear, for further reasons, to have combined to prevent her departure. Bernardo, therefore, finding himself lonely at Rome, determined that Torquato, at least, should come to him, with his tutor, Don Angeluzzo. He comforted himself with the hope of procuring his wife's and daughter's liberation subsequently. The pain and the tears of this parting from his mother are recorded by Tasso, in a passionate and touching canzone, composed by him at Urbino, on his second flight from his prison at Ferrara, but unfortunately never finished.

Me unkind fortune from my mother's breast
Untimely tore. Ah! yet with plaintive sighs
I call to mind those kisses which she steep'd
In streaming tears, those burning prayers she heap'd,
Which the false winds swept idly through the skies.
Ne'er more was I to meet her face to face.

Caught in those arms' embrace,
In those so sweet indissoluble ties.
But like Ascanius from the Ilian fire,
With faltering steps to track my wand'ring sire.

After dismissing her young son with much affection and regret, Porzia with her daughter retired into a convent, to avoid the continued persecutions of her relations. On arriving at Rome, Torquato returned with fresh diligence to his studies, in which he was soon joined by a cousin named Cristoforo, the son of Cavaliere Gian Jacopo Tasso, the head, it seems, of the family in Bergamo.

Rome had at this time recovered in great measure from the fearful desolation inflicted on it by the Imperial army under Bourbon. The scholars and literary characters, who, after crowding the city during the Pontificate of Leo X., had been dispersed by that terrible calamity, had gradually returned during the reigns of Paul III., and Julius III. The

schools of painting, of sculpture, of philosophy, of classical and polite literature, were reopened. Professors again lectured, and students thronged to their instructions. Bernardo procured for Torquato and his companion the best teachers who could be found in the city. "I wish you above all things to know, (he says, writing to his cousin,) that they have the first master in all Italy. He is a man of the greatest learning, perfect in both languages. He has the best possible method of teaching, is a gentleman in his manner, and devoid of pedantry." This, perhaps, was Maurizio Cataneo, an eminent scholar, such as Bernardo describes; a man of good birth and character, and a brave soldier; secretary at the time to the Cardinal Albano.

Meanwhile, a great change had taken place in the politics of Europe, and especially of Italy. Paul IV., a very learned theologian and scholar, and, till his elevation to the Pontificate,

of the most recluse and ascetic habits, when, on the death of Marcellus II., Julius III.'s short-lived successor, he was chosen Pope, changed his manner of life, proclaimed that he would live as became a great prince, and called his two nephews, sons of the Count of Montorio, to Rome, to support him in his resolution. One of these he made Governor of Rome; the other, although he had been hitherto a soldier, he raised to the Cardinalate. As was usual with the relatives of Popes, they immediately aimed at independent princely establishments. These could only be obtained at the expense of the Imperial possessions in Italy. Paul was already ill-disposed towards the Emperor, having been opposed in his election by the Cardinals of his interest. The Cardinal Caraffa, the Pope's nephew, when a soldier, had quitted the Imperial army in disgust, and served with the French forces under Philip Strozzi in Tuscany. These various mo-

tives estranged the Pope from Charles; while his nephews urged him to form a league offensive and defensive with Henry of France. His hesitation, however, would not have been overcome, had he not been offended by the Peace of Religion and the Toleration of Protestants, agreed upon at the Diet of Augsburg, September 25th, 1555. On the Emperor's refusal to annul this compact, the Pope completed his covenant with Henry. Suddenly, the Emperor startled Europe by his famous abdication. This made Henry, on his part, lukewarm in his engagements, and it required all the arts of the Cardinal Caraffa to keep him at all steadfast to his purpose. This change of policy in the Papal court, and the friendship to which he was admitted by the Pope's nephew, revived Bernardo's hope of attaining some favours from France, or even perhaps of being restored to Naples. The comfort, however, of these prospects was immediately embittered by the news

of his unfortunate wife's decease. Worn out by her trials and afflictions, by the agony of separation from her husband and son, by the unkindness and oppression of her own relatives, by her continual but ineffectual endeavours to overcome their opposition to her re-union with Bernardo, this poor lady languished in the nunnery of San Festo, where she had found a refuge for herself and her Cornelia. She was soon seized with a stroke of apoplexy. She lay speechless for four-and-twenty hours, and then died. The suddenness and rapidity of her demise, after the perpetual persecutions to which she had been exposed, engendered painful suspicions of poison or violence in her husband's mind. Her death also entailed upon him the loss of her dowry, and the money due to her from her brothers. Added to this, there was a consciousness that he had not done all for her liberation which he might have done. Further still, he was unable to recover Cornelia

from the same parties, who had so tormented her mother. Torquato also, to cut off all prospect of recovering his maternal inheritance, was accused by his uncles, and found guilty by the Camera Reale of participation in his father's rebellion, though he was only nine years old when he left Naples.

Another misfortune was the death of his cousin, the Cavaliere G. J. Tasso, father of Cristoforo, Torquato's fellow student, in whom he lost a dear friend, and efficient assistant. All these afflictions together seem nearly to have overwhelmed Bernardo. For a season, he surrendered himself to his sorrow, unable to attend to business, or even to the completion of his "Amadigi," although it was nearly concluded when all these sorrowful tidings overtook him.

Soon, however, we find him revived from his despondency, and imagining various schemes to retrieve his ruined fortunes. Sometimes he

applies to the Spanish court for the restoration of his wife's property. Sometimes he tries again to make interest, by elegant flatteries and sonnets, with Henry II. and Margaret de Valois, and the French courtiers. Sometimes he conceives the idea of taking orders, and obtaining some ecclesiastical preferment through his favour with the Pope's nephews. Sometimes he composes sonnets to the memory of his wife, with pathetic accounts of all his past misfortunes. His labours, however, were still all vain. Neither entreaties, nor arguments, nor flattery, nor poetry, could elicit any substantial advantage from any of the hard-hearted courts to which he applied. Before long, his very residence at Rome became unsafe; for, provoked at last by the dealings of the Pope with the King of France, Philip II., who had succeeded his father, Charles, on the throne of Spain, reluctantly commanded the Duke of Alva to advance from the Neapolitan dominions

against Rome. He forthwith occupied the greater part of the papal territories south of the city, and spread his forces over the Campagna, so that his light horse made inroads up to the very gates. Alarmed at the idea of another occupation of Rome by the Spanish troops; and aware through his daughter, Cornelia, that he was especially marked out for punishment as a traitor and a rebel, Bernardo resolved to flee. The papal politics also began at this time to change, with their usual cameleon versatility. There appeared indications of a reconciliation between the King of Spain and Paul. If this took place, Bernardo's safety was equally compromised. The continuance of war, or the restoration of peace, seemed alike to endanger him. Perhaps also the risk to which, if Manso's story is true, his young son had just exposed himself, confirmed him in his resolution of quitting Rome. With that adventurous spirit, which was reckoned, as we have noticed,

hereditary in the Tassi, young Torquato, at the age of twelve years and a half, hearing that a Giambatista Manso was left in command of the army during some absence of the Duke of Alva, and imagining him to be his godfather, an advocate of the same name, resolved to seek an interview with him, with a notion perhaps of inquiring about his property. He stole away by himself, and in secret. As he approached Anagni, the head-quarters of the Spanish troops, he met a squadron of their cavalry, under the Marquis of Santa Agata, who, struck by his youth, beauty, and courage, brought him, at his request, to Manso. Torquato immediately perceived his mistake, and was alarmed when he saw a stranger, and remembered his participation in his father's condemnation. The warriors, however, only admired his spirit, and avowing their old friendship for his unfortunate parent, con-

ducted him back to the neighbourhood of the city.*

For these, or other reasons, Bernardo hastened to send off Torquato, with his young cousin and fellow-student, to their relations in Bergamo. Shortly after, having with difficulty obtained the consent of the Pope's nephews, he departed himself in haste, with nothing except two shirts and his "Amadigi." At Ravenna, he received an invitation from Guidubaldo, Duke of Urbino, to attach himself to his court, with an offer of a villa in Pesaro, well furnished, and fit for poetical meditations.

* This anecdote is questioned by Serassi, chiefly on some trifling chronological objections. Manso seems more likely to have erred in the chronology than in the story itself.

CHAPTER IV.

WANDERINGS CONTINUED.

THE Italian courts presented, at this period, a very splendid spectacle. Italy was at last respiring from "the deadly wounds" inflicted upon her for so many years. That peace for which Petrarch cried so fervently, spread its soft atmosphere over her mountains, and plains, and valleys. Though the same poet might still have asked with Dante, and Ariosto, and Filicaia, and indeed all the native writers, "che fan quì tante pellegrine spade?" as Lombardy and Naples were provinces of Spain, those

swords no longer covered the fields with barbarian and Italian blood. The Condottieri, who before had led contending armies as generals to conflict and plunder, were now diminished and degraded into brigands, renowned and mischievous in that character; such, for instance, as Marco di Sciarra, Batistella, Alfonso Piccolomini, and Cornetto del Sambuco, but no longer able to disturb and destroy upon a large scale.

The great General Emmanuel Philibert, who had lately re-constituted the Duchy of Savoy, introduced the practice of keeping regular troops, and the example of regular government into the neighbouring States. The Popes, who succeeded Paul IV., discontinued, or rather softened off the miserable custom of nepotism, that so fruitful source of trouble and war in Italy. The governments of the various principalities became hereditary; and the republics which yet remained, Venice namely, and Genoa

crystallised into strict oligarchies. Italy had lost her liberty, but recovered her life, however inglorious. The stir of mind, the exaltation of genius, the rivalry of noble emulation, which generally accompany, if they are not awakened by, periods of confusion and contention, outlived for a season the troubles amidst which they had been born, and found freer room for their development. The country was for the most part fertile, and well cultivated; the cities were still centres of commerce to the world. The superiority in arts and manufactures, which distinguished them, drew the wealth of Europe into their hands. The beauty of Florence, the splendour of Venice, the magnificence of Naples, the sanctity of Rome attracted pilgrims and travellers, those common objects of Italian plunder, from all the nations of Christendom.

The first effulgence of painting and sculpture had, indeed, passed away with Michael Angelo, and Giulio Romano, and Raphael, and da Vinci.

But the brushes of Titian, and Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and Palma dyed the canvas with more brilliant, and nearly as beautiful colours. The Zuccheri and Barochi at Rome, the three Caracci at Bologna revived and carried on the glory of art into the following century; Palladio, Buontalenti in architecture, Bellarmin, Baronius, Vanini, Davila, Paolo Sarpi, Seripando, and many others in history and theology, and the moral sciences, each of them in himself a host; Barozzi, a great architect likewise, and Monaldeschi and many more in fortifications and military tactics; scholars endless and useless to numerate; cavaliers of distinguished excellence and skill; Guarini and our Tasso, with many inferior pens, both male and female, in poetry and philosophy; preachers, physicians, botanists, geographers, naturalists, astronomers, such as the two Galilei, father and son, the latter yet young, but so very famous; critics also, and printers and engravers, goldsmiths and jewellers,

men of all ranks and conditions, full of genius, and uniting in themselves a wonderful variety of attainments and knowledge, make Italy altogether a dazzling scene during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and justify the boast of Tiraboschi, that Italy was the mother and nurse of the sciences and arts; and that from her, as from a centre, the light of knowledge radiated over all the nations of Europe.

San Carlo Borromeo, also, by his life, and instructions, and unwearied labours, had revived the nearly extinguished spark of religion. There was a real change for the better, and far more outward decency; removing, in some measure, from society the horrible depravity, licentiousness, and infidelity, which so defiled Italian manners and literature in the beginning of the century. That great prelate had established, or reopened, either directly, or by his influence and authority, numerous schools and universities, thronged with students from all

quarters of the Christian world. In theology, in philosophy, in medicine, in the physical sciences, in classical and domestic literature, in criticism, in the arts, in poetry, there was an universal rivalry over the whole country. Academies and societies at Rome, Naples, Florence, Venice, Pisa, Ferrara, Turin, and indeed every other city, increased and extended the mutual improvement and emulation.

Nor were the princes and nobles behindhand in their endeavours to outshine one another. This it was which gave their little courts so remarkable an appearance at the period I am speaking of. Out of the rich and ample materials which abounded on every side, each strove who should gather around him the brightest galaxy of wit, valour, genius, scholarship, science, art, piety. They contended who should rear the most magnificent palaces, lay out the fairest and most poetical villas and gardens, collect the most sumptuous furniture,

the rarest antiquities, the noblest statues, the most beautiful pictures, give the sweetest concerts, receive the most elegant compliments in prose and verse, exhibit the stateliest and most fanciful pageants, hold the most knightly and gorgeous tournaments.

They laboured more usefully, though not in general so carefully, to excel one another in husbandry and manufactures, in their provision for education, and religion. They were, therefore, continually on the watch for any rising artist, or student, or poet, or cavalier, in order that they might outstrip their rivals, in attracting or binding them to their service. Talent also, and genius, discrimination, taste, and learning, seemed hereditary in several of the noble and princely families of the time, in the chiefs themselves, and in their female relatives. They were consequently by no means unequal to select ornaments for their households; and the publicity in which the

distinguished men of the age grew up and lived, gave them, in general, sufficient opportunity of becoming acquainted with their characters and qualifications, and made their choice less hazardous and uncertain.

Hence, these petty Italian courts commanded the admiration of their contemporaries for their splendour, riches, and elegance, when those of far greater sovereigns were judged comparatively poor, tasteless, and mean. Hence also they seem to have been centres of attraction to all men of science and genius, from which they could never tear themselves, notwithstanding the too frequent injuries and sufferings to which the dependant state of courtiers necessarily exposed them. They could, and did, change, even continually, from one to another; but to forsake all, to give up the manner of life, the fascination of the gay society, the eloquent flow of conversation in which they shared, the vivid shows, the tasteful banquets,

the mutual comparison of their various compositions, the perusal of their complimentary sonnets and canzoni, the skirmishes of sarcasm and wit, the interchange of applauses and criticisms, the flatteries given and received, the continual excitement, was almost more than they could bear to do.

Among these courts, none were more distinguished for splendour and elegance than those of the Dukes of Urbino and Ferrara. The d'Este, indeed, of Ferrara, were considerably the most wealthy and powerful of the two, competing for a long while with the Medici of Florence for precedence, until the title of Grand Duke, obtained by the latter, in A.D. 1569, from the Pope, decided the important question in their favour. And the other courts, as those of Florence, Turin, Naples, Rome, and the merchant princes of Venice, might exceed both, certainly Urbino, in riches and grandeur.

But the activity and talents of the families

of Este and Rovere counterbalanced any advantages of superior power or wealth. The former also had the noblest blood in Europe, a long succession of renowned chiefs, and high and royal alliances, as well as a territory at this time stretching from the Adriatic to the Gulf of Genoa, to enhance their dignity. Both States were particularly celebrated at this period, especially for their patronage of the arts and muses; and both, before the end of the century, were to be swallowed up by the encroaching power of the Papacy, and to decay and wither under its blighting government. They were the two courts which were to exercise the chief influence over the fortune of Tasso.

Bernardo found shelter, as we said, with Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, who took him and his son, as the phrase was, under his protection. Thither, after a six months' sojourn at Bergamo, he summoned Torquato.

Here also he completed his "Amadigi;" but after he had finished it, and according to the custom of the age, submitted it to the criticisms of several friends and scholars, he had suddenly, as he complains, to recommence his labours. The poem had been originally dedicated to the King of France, in whose service his patron, Sanseverino, was engaged. Addresses and episodes complimentary to the royal family of France, were interspersed throughout the long work. "Amadigi" himself was represented as a Frenchman. But the author having found Sanseverino unable or unwilling to assist him in any way, and having now entered the service of the Duke of Urbino, attached to the Spanish interest, he was persuaded by that prince to offer his "Amadigi" to Philip II., and seek restitution of his property in Naples from that monarch. He was obliged, therefore, to change dedications,

and episodes, and the character of his hero, so as to glorify Spain and its monarchs, instead of their rivals the sovereigns of France. This, perhaps, is a little singular, as the two countries have both claimed the origin of the romance; Spain, it is generally thought, upon the strongest arguments.

Bernardo accomplished this work with his usual industry, and then proceeded to Venice to have it printed. He was honourably entertained in that city, and shortly made secretary to the Academy della Fama, with a salary of two hundred golden crowns, proposing to settle there for the remainder of his life. Soon, however, either from restlessness, or from the threatened dissolution of the Academy, he gave up his situation, and, after publishing his epic with his other works, left Venice, and entered the service of Luigi, Cardinal d'Este, at Ferrara. This he exchanged before

long for the court of Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, and in his service he closed his troubled and unquiet life.

His "Amadigi" disappointed both the world, and its author. It had been waited for with breathless anticipation. But its prolixity and mediocrity were too much even for that age, and posterity has joined in consigning it to oblivion. Indeed, though he is highly praised by several Italian critics, foreigners at all events cannot help uniting in the judgment of Ginguené and Sismondi, that were it not for his son, the elder Tasso would be altogether forgotten.

The author had hoped to secure his fortune also by his publication; but its sale by no means answered his expectations; and thus he was forced to live on in that uncomfortable state of dependance, wandering from court to court to the end of his days. We may add to Dante's lament over such a fate already quoted

the famous lines of a cavalier of as great spirit, and a far greater poet than Bernardo, renewing the complaint over the discomfort and misery of this life.—

Full little knowest thou, who hast not tried,
What hell it is in suing long to bide:
To lose long days that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent:
To speed to-day: to be put back to-morrow:
To feed in hope: to pine with fear and sorrow:
To have thy prince's grace, yet want his peers:
To have thy asking, yet wait many years:
To fret thy soul with crosses, and with cares:
To eat thy heart, through comfortless despairs:
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.*

* Spenser, "Mother Hubbard's Tales," L. 895.

CHAPTER V.

COLLEGE LIFE OF TORQUATO TASSO.

DURING the wanderings of his father, Torquato was assiduously turning to account all the opportunities of improvement which that parent, notwithstanding his difficulties and straitened circumstances, contrived to provide for him in abundance. At Pesaro, where they lodged during their six months' attachment to the Duke of Urbino, Torquato was able to avail himself again of the instructions, both in learning and chivalry, of his former master or guide Maurizio Cataneo, whom the Duke with many pressing instances had drawn to his court. He

was also admitted to the companionship of the Duke's son and heir, Francesco Maria, who ever recognised in Tasso a former associate, and fellow-student, and to whose affection he was in great measure indebted for deliverance from his horrible imprisonment.

He accompanied his father to Venice, and served him there as amanuensis, writing down, or copying out for him, his various compositions, both in verse and prose, and also diligently transcribing, after the practice of many great authors and orators, and the directions of Cicero, the works of the most celebrated masters in his native language, especially Petrarch and Dante, the last above all, for the further amelioration and perfection of his style.

At this time, Bernardo, unwilling as he informs us, that his son should be exposed to the same precarious courtier life under which he had himself groaned so long, and feeling

that poetry and literature were but a poor provision for one of his child's nobility and pretensions, resolved as many other fathers with poetical sons have determined, and with the same result, to settle Torquato in the legal profession, "by which" he affirms, "many men of inferior talents have succeeded in raising themselves to dignity and wealth, while he had remained a beggar to the end."

Ovid, Bocaccio, Petrarch, Ariosto, had suffered already from the same vain paternal imagination. Every one knows how fruitless was the endeavour, and every one knows the heavy lamentations which the bards poured over this sad waste of time, how the Roman could not endure* to "learn up wordy laws, and prostitute his voice in the unthankful forum, to turn

* Nec me verbosas leges, ediscere nec me
Ingrato voces prostituisse foro.
Mortale est quod quæris opus, mihi fama perennis
Quæritur, ut toto semper in orbe canar.

to a mortal perishable work, when his object was undying universal fame;"—how the soft Florentine hears the spirit reminding him, that the studies of philosophy, and still more of poesy charmed him in opposition to all his father's wishes: how the tender bard of Laura mourns that he was given over in his youth to the art of "selling words, yea lies; "how again he asks indignantly, "what he has to do with a trumpery 'de aquâ arcenda,' or a trifling 'de stillicidio;' and the "comments upon comments which new sprigs of the law continually heap up, and all those studies, which have no tendency to promote virtue, but only to make a man covetous, lying, passionate!" how the great romancer triumphantly declares, that* "though his father chased him not with spurs only, but

* Mio padre mi cacciò con spiedi e lancie
(Non che con sproni) a volger testi e chiose
E m'occupò cinqu' anni in quelle ciancie
Ma poichè vide poco fruttuose [L'opre

with darts and lances, to turn over old texts and glosses, and occupied him five years in such fooleries, he was obliged at last to give it up, and set him free."

Torquato was too grave and philosophical to speak thus lightly of so learned and excellent a profession. He only groans under the heavy load, which his father fixed upon him in order to restore his ruined fortunes, when he forced him to "the unpleasant studies, under whose weight he lay overwhelmed, unknown to others. a burden to himself." He had, however, no very great reason to complain so piteously, for

> L' opre, ed il tempo invan gittarsi, dopo
> Molto contrasti in libertà mi pose.

If Ariosto called the studies of the law *ciancie*, he had to hear his own inventions, called by the coarser name of *coglionerie*, in the noted question which his patron, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, addressed him, when the poet presented him his book, "Messer Ludovico, dove mai avete pigliato tante coglionerie?"

he had passed a year at Padua in supposed attendance on the law lectures of the professors, and at the end of that period had produced—an epic poem !

The college life of Tasso arrests the attention. It presents us with a lively picture of the times. It shows us by what a conflict of mind the genius of the youth of Italy was sharpened into such perfection.

As Bernardo was then resident at Venice, it was natural that he should enter his son in the University of Padua. It was in the Venetian territories, and the usual resort of the young Venetian nobility. It was, however, at this time perhaps the most flourishing and distinguished of all the Italian universities. In medicine, it always bore the palm, in jurisprudence and all other studies, except theology, it competed with Bologna. This, generally esteemed the queen of universities in Italy, had fallen into decay, and was only just on the point

of restoration. And at this particular period there was a galaxy of talent in almost every department of knowledge assembled together in Padua. The lecturer in civil law, under whom his father intended Torquato to study, was the celebrated Guido Pancirola. There were Speron Sperone, Francesco Piccolomini, Pendario, Sigonio, Robortello, and many other distinguished names.

Some were public lecturers. Some were private teachers. Others had no definite appointment, but opened their apartments to all industrious scholars, where the subjects of their studies were discussed with much freedom, and both masters and disciples met and contested with one another the palm of wit and eloquence. The distinguished citizens joined in these assemblies, or gave entertainments themselves, where the same discussions were renewed. The students also were of all classes, and yet mingled in these

re-unions on terms of equality and liberty. Opinions were started, passages or sentences from ancient and modern authors, new discoveries in science or art, compositions in prose and verse, were submitted to the criticisms of the assembled company. The most celebrated champions undertook opposite sides in the arguments. Poems were read, canto after canto, or stanza after stanza, as they were written; improvements in the past, suggestions for the future, were freely offered, attentively discussed, and thankfully received.

The lecturers and professors, as of old in Athens, in gardens of Academus, or the stoic porch, and afterwards in early Christian times, when the Basils and Gregories resorted to that city, contested, with the keenest rivalry and jealousy, who should attract the most numerous, and most renowned disciples. If the antagonist parties met in the streets, they could not refrain from open and violent disputes: sometimes

they came to blows; daggers even were drawn, and blood shed.

Into such a tumult of learning, young Tasso at the age of seventeen years was launched. His stature, however, for he was very tall, his natural gravity, his early trials, his great learning and genius made him appear considerably older. And in such sparkling society it was not unnatural, that while he attended in form the lectures upon law to which his father had consecrated his education, he should give far more time and attention to those in philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, to all of which he was equally inclined. Indeed, there was scarcely any study except that for which he was intended which he did not follow with the greatest zeal and ardour; for he was a proficient even in mathematics. We shall see him chosen to lecture on the sphere, and indeed, to fill the mathematical chair in Ferrara, later in life; and in his poetry there is the same manifesta-

tions of universal knowledge, which we admire in that of Milton.

He made many friendships at Padua, useful to him as those of his earlier days, in his subsequent trials and calamities. Scipione Gonzaga and Annibale di Capua, afterwards Cardinals, were his most distinguished associates. These, with several other names, have obtained that immortality, which poetry confers from the muse of him whom it was condescension to befriend while they lived together. Tasso, indeed, shared the apartments of the young Annibale, whose princely parents were rejoiced to provide so distinguished a scholar for their son's companion, while Tasso, on the other hand, without such assistance, could hardly have met the necessary expences.

It was during this his first residence at Padua, which lasted but one year's space, that in addition to his unwearied studies, and many other compositions in prose and verse, he wrote

'his first epic poem "the Rinaldo." The hero is the famous Paladin, cousin of Orlando, so well known to the readers of Boiardo and Ariosto. His love and marriage with Clarice, daughter of Ivon, king of Gascony, and the adventures through which he passes in achieving this object, are the theme of the poem.

It is but little read now, and would hardly be so at all, if it were not by the author of the "Jerusalem Delivered." Nevertheless, it is curious to observe the boldness and confidence with which young Tasso propounds his views on the subject of epic poetry in his preface to the work, foreshadowing, by his criticisms on Aristotle's precepts, the eminence to which he was presently to rise. There is much polish and elegance in his verse: the stanzas in "ottava rima" are sonorous and well-rounded. Altogether it by no means equals the opinion which Manso and other Italian critics express, preferring it above almost every previous epic:

but it may justify the assertion of Menage, quoted by Serassi, that as the Odyssey is called by Longinus the production of age, but of the age of Homer, so the Rinaldo is the production of youth, but that youth, Tasso's.

It certainly is a wonderful work for a youth of eighteen, in the space of ten months, amidst a multiplicity of other occupations, and constant participation in society, "a fair morning star of the noonday glory of his genius." It created an immense sensation at the time. While it was only circulating in manuscript, Torquato's friends were very urgent with him to publish it, especially two distinguished professors at Padua, Danese Cataneo and Cesare Pavese. His father's consent was obtained with difficulty. He felt instinctively that his son was launching amidst the "calamities of authors."

It is amusing to observe, with what condescension and self-complacency the veteran

bard, who would be consigned to complete oblivion were it not for the attraction of his son's fame, speaks of that son's works and talents, and labours to dissuade him from entering the same path, which he himself had trodden so successfully, but with so little fruit. Nevertheless, feeling it vain to oppose "the intense desire of youth, which, like a torrent swollen with many waters, rushes headlong toward its end," and pressed by the urgen exhortations and favourable opinions of so many eminent scholars, especially of il Molino and Domenico Veniero, and by the persuasions, as it were, of the whole University of Padua, Bernardo at last gave an unwilling consent; and the poem was printed at Venice, by Franceschi, in April, A.D., 1562, and dedicated to Luigi, Cardinal d'Este, to whose service Bernardo had lately attached himself for a short season.

During this, his first residence at Padua,

Torquato had conceived the grand idea of his "Jerusalem Delivered," of the conquest, that is, of Jerusalem, by Godfrey of Bouillon, and had even consulted the same Danese Cataneo, who was so eager for the publication of the "Rinaldo," on the subject; and receiving every encouragement from him, had resolved to direct his studies, with a constant view to the execution of his design. It seems, however, that he did not actually commence the poem at Padua, but at Bologna; for, in the November of A.D., 1562, he exchanged the former for the latter University.

The occasion was this: two years before, at the instigation of Carlo Borromeo, Pier Donato Cesi, Bishop of Narni, was appointed Governor of Bologna by Pope Pius IV. The University, as we observed, had fallen into decay, and the Roman Court was desirous of restoring it to its ancient splendour and pre-eminence. For this purpose, the Governor rebuilt, with great

rapidity and magnificence, the schools and other college buildings, which were originally mean, and now half in ruins. Then he stimulated the Senate of the place to attract, by large salaries, the most distinguished professors, and scholars, both Italian and Ultramontan.

Amongst those collected by such temptations, was Gio-Angelo Papio, a celebrated lawyer and man of letters. He, on his arrival, urged the Prelate, as he was so anxious for renowned students, to invite Torquato Tasso, a striking evidence of the unrivalled celebrity to which he had attained at so early an age. Besides this very flattering invitation, Tasso seems to have had private motives of his own for quitting Padua. There had been one of those street rows, as we should name them in our universities, between the partisans of two rival lecturers.

Sigonio and Robertello, professors of the Greek and Latin "humanities," entertained a

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long standing jealousy of one another. Mutual recriminations and accusations had long flown to and fro between them. No sooner did either of them commence lecturing on any subject, than the other immediately started a rival course. Sigonio having begun to expound Aristotle's "Poetics" with great elegance and eloquence, Robertello opened his antagonist school, but not with equal success—"Inde iræ" —for the latter being a fiery and violent man, took every opportunity of insulting Sigonio, who was of a meeker and more patient disposition.

Their respective disciples participated in their masters' jealousies, exasperated their mutual indignation, and joined in the taunts and reproaches which they hurled at one another, even in public. One day, meeting in the streets, they came to blows, and in the tumult, Sigonio was gashed in the face with a poniard, and otherwise maltreated. Fearful of worse

injury, and desirous of peace, he migrated to Bologna, and Pendasio, another famous lecturer, and other parties with him.

Torquato was much attached to Sigonio, esteemed his lectures on the Poetic Art very highly, and seems altogether to have been one of the party. When, therefore, he received the invitation of the Bolognese Senate, he also followed the professors in their migration. He was received with great distinction at his new university, admitted to the intimate friendship of the Governor, and caressed by all the most eminent citizens, especially the Senator Francesco Bolognetti, himself a versifier, and busily engaged at the time in a long, dull, heroic poem, "Il Constante," mentioned, and slightly reviewed, by Tasso, in his "Dialogues on Heroic Poetry." He also, though only nineteen years of age, was chosen to lecture publicly on different subjects, especially this same theme of "Heroic Poetry." In fact, his dialogues

which bear that title, are the subsequent embodying and explanation of the materials which he used in these lectures.

In this year also he began the "Jerusalem Delivered," his great epic, of which, as already noticed, he had conceived the idea in the preceding year, at Padua. He composed, or, at least, sketched out, the first three cantos during his stay at Bologna, dedicating it originally to the Duke of Urbino, under whose protection he was supposed to be. It is marvellous, Serasso observes, that among the hundred and sixteen stanzas, of which this commencement consists, many of the most beautiful in that portion of his poem are to be found, although his later and more finished taste made him change the greater part of the sketch, and exceedingly improve the order of the story, the sublimity of the conceptions, and the beauty of the diction.

Bolognetti, when he saw this beginning, and

heard the whole plan from the lips of the young author, was so struck, that he exclaimed in the well-known words of Propertius,

> Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii,
> Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade.

Tasso's residence at Bologna, and the composition of his poem, were suddenly interrupted. In the universities of Italy, and especially in that of Bologna at this period, a multitude of satires and pasquinades were in constant circulation. The principal citizens, and tutors, and scholars, were all severely lashed in them. They were in general only sources of laughter. But Torquato, having read in a party of friends one of these biting productions, in which several persons of note, and he himself in particular, were very roughly handled, was concluded, though without any evidence, from his known ability and wit, to be the author of the "Squib." His renown and favour with the governor, or rather vice-

legate, as the Bishop of Narni now was under Cardinal Borromeo, may probably have made him an object of envy and ill-will.

In consequence of this suspicion, while he was absent from home, the Beadle was sent suddenly, and without notice, to his rooms. All his papers were seized, and conveyed to the judge of the place, a certain Marcantonio Arresio, by whom they were strictly and unceremoniously overlooked. Several gentlemen also, friends of Tasso, were examined. Not the least evidence could be obtained that the accused was the author of the "Pasquinade," nor any ground for further proceedings discovered. The young high-spirited poet, however, was much offended with the insult. He resolved immediately to quit the University which showed him so little respect; and writing a letter of indignant justification to the vice-legate, started off at once, with the intention of repairing to his father at the court of the Duke of Mantua; for whose service

he had lately quitted that of the Cardinal d'Este.

He had, however, only reached Modena, when he was stopped by tidings that Bernardo had been sent on public business to Rome. He therefore betook himself to the hospitality of the Counts of Rangoni, ancient friends of his family, from one of whose farms, named Castel-Vetro, he wrote his letter to the Bishop of Narni. He then removed to Correggio to visit Claudia Rangona, a lady of the greatest beauty, learning, wit, and virtue, by whom he was most kindly received, and in whose society his mind recovered its evenness and serenity. Here he received a letter from his great friend and college ally, Scipio Gonzaga, who, having heard of his misfortunes at Bologna, invited him urgently to return to Padua, and assist him in establishing the academy of "the Ethereals," (Eterei), which he was just forming in that University.

Torquato listened readily to these friendly intreaties.

On his return to Padua, he was greeted with universal rejoicings and acclamations. "The Ethereals" especially exulted to enrol in their society so agreeable an associate, so distinguished a scholar, so promising a bard, so graceful a cavalier; and composed as it was, of so many learned students and accomplished youths from among the chief families of Venice, and the princely and noble houses of all the north of Italy, it must have been with great pleasure that Torquato mingled again with his ancient fellow-collegians, and their companions, gay, splendid, and studious, on the intimate footing which was customary with these "Academies." On Tasso's arrival, "the Ethereals" assembled in the house of Scipio Gonzaga to receive him; and were saluted by him with a sonnet, in which, playing on the word Tasso, which means

a yew-tree as well as badger, he complains of the rain and storm falling at Bologna, on a plant so humble, as well as on the high forest trees and continues:

What though of yore a frail neglected spray
Now, thanks to him who chose it here to bower
'Mongst his fair laurels, 'neath his fost'ring sway
Soon to high heav'n thrice glorious shall it tower.
Warm rays, and fostering airs, and crystal dews
It thence expects, with soft and ripening power
Through the sharp fruits all sweetness to diffuse,
'Till their rich juice may charm each wand'ring bee
Distilling honey, which the muse shall store
On high Parnassus' top for nations yet to be.

In this academy (for in all these academies it was usual for every brother to take some peculiar nickname or surname) Torquato called himself Il Pentito (the Penitent), either because he repented having wasted some of his precious time at the law, or far more probably to express his sorrow for ever having deserted Padua for

Bologna, and separated himself, even if only for some months, from such pleasant and dear associates.

During his second residence at Padua, he prosecuted his studies, if possible, with greater ardour than ever. He devoted himself particularly at this time to philosophy, frequenting the public and private instructions of Francesco Piccolomini, and taking the greatest pains to master thoroughly the ethical and political treatises of Aristotle, and above all, the whole works and doctrine of Plato. This latter philosopher Torquato could never sufficiently read, love, admire, and strive to imitate.

So eagerly did he plunge into his sparkling though abstruse mysteries, that there remain several of Plato's dialogues annotated and commented on by him in his own handwriting. He did not, however, for a moment lose sight of the great poem which he had conceived and begun. In all his labours and studies, he kept

the improvement and completion of his original plan carefully in view; and continued collecting, with unwearied industry, from poets, historians, orators, and philosophers their choicest flowers of imagination and expression for the inter-texture and embellishment of his grand and elaborate work.

He even by way of preparation, composed during this year three discourses on the Art of Poetry, one of which is devoted to his favourite subject, heroic poetry, and submitted in them his opinions and conclusions to the criticism and judgment of those friends, whom he esteemed most competent to assist him.

It was fortunate that a copy of these discourses remained in possession of Scipio Gonzaga, as otherwise in the subsequent shipwreck of Tasso's fortune, amid the loss of so many of his papers, they would have perished altogether; and independently of their intrinsic merit, the ideas of such a master of the art must ever be

peculiarly interesting, more especially when they present us with the rules by which he was guided in the composition of his great "Epic," and which he framed expressly for that purpose. They were published afterwards from that copy of Gonzaga's in the year 1587, that is about nine years before Tasso's death.

When the summer vacation arrived, Torquato hastened to Mantua to visit his father, who had returned thither from Rome, and found him healthy and flourishing, notwithstanding his advanced age, for he was now seventy years old. The meeting of father and son was very touching. Bernardo could not easily have borne that any one else should surpass and eclipse his established renown; but that his young and beloved son should do so filled him with pride and delight. He rejoiced to find that his own arguments for transgressing the rules of Aristotle, in the composition of the romantic "Epic," had been unavailing to divert

Torquato from his noble ambition of imitating Homer and Virgil in unity of action.

He listened with deep pleasure to the ideas, and read with exultation the excellent beginning of the youthful bard. He added his approval and commendations to the universal encouragement of Italy. Torquato himself, in his "Apology" for his poem against the abusive criticisms of the Academy della Crusca, has left an affectionate testimony of the affectionate applauses with which his father greeted him. Concluding his defence of Bernardo, who was attacked jointly with himself by the arrogant academicians, he says:

"I do not seem to have thoroughly defended my father, if I defend not his son, whom he loved far more dearly than his own writings, and my own writings, toward which he entertained an equal affection. Whence I am sure, that if he was willing to be surpassed by any one, it was to be surpassed by me alone. And

here, after the custom of poets, I invoke memory, and Him who gave it me, together with the gifts of understanding, when He sent my soul to sojourn as a pilgrim in this my body, that my sire, in the last years of his life, when we were both together in the apartments of the Duke of Mantua, told me that the love he bore to me had made him forget the love which he bore to his poem; and that he loved no worldly glory, nor any perpetuity of fame, in comparison with my life, and that nothing so delighted him as my reputation."

If we remember the immense value which Bernardo set on the great work of his life, namely his "Amadigi," and Aristotle's observations on the affection of poets for their literary offspring, the great tenderness of such expressions may be better appreciated; otherwise, it must be acknowledged, they sound cold and forced.

As to worldly prospects Bernardo could only

repeat the usual story of disappointed hopes. The dedication of his poem to the Spanish monarch, notwithstanding all the trouble which it cost him, had failed in eliciting any substantial recompense. He still foresaw nothing for his son, save the same painful dependance upon princes, the same courtier life which he had so often deprecated.

Unable to escape the necessity, he resolved to make interest in his son's behalf with his former patron the Cardinal Luigi d'Este, to whom Torquato, by his directions, had dedicated his Rinaldo. He applied for this object to the Count Fulvio Rangone, his particular friend and an ally of the Cardinal's. Torquato accordingly on his return to Padua, when term began, paid a hasty visit to the Court of Ferrara, and received assurances that, before many months, provision should be made for him in Luigi's service.

When he reached the University in November he recommenced his studies, and renewed his

public discourses on various subjects. At this time, Batista Guarini, the celebrated author of "the Pastor Fido," and other dramas and poems, joined the academy of the "Ethereals," and became Torquato's intimate friend, as he was subsequently his antagonist and rival, at least, in common estimation. Guarini, indeed, was chosen secretary of the academy, and Gradenigo president, on the death of Stefano Santini, the former chief, whose untimely end was deeply deplored by all his associates, and in whose praise Torquato composed and spoke a funeral oration, full of the highest commendations. Guarini also lamented him in two sonnets, published among the poetry of the academy, of which they were all members.

And now, at last, Torquato received information that the Cardinal Luigi had given him an appointment among his gentlemen, and expected him at Ferrara before December, when Barbara, Archduchess of Austria, betrothed to

Alfonso II., the Cardinal's elder brother, was to arrive at the Court.

Speron Sperone, an old master of Torquato's, lately returned to Padua in disgust from the Papal Palace, whither he had resorted with high anticipations on the election of Pius IV., laboured hard to dissuade him from accepting the invitation; painting the dangers, the calumnies, and persecutions, to which a court life would expose him, in the darkest colours. His representations, however, were ineffectual. Indeed, his reasonings had not much influence on himself, for after a time he returned again to Rome, with the same ambitious desires, when Gregory XIII. succeeded Pius V. in the tiara.

Torquato, therefore, full of youthful hope, and an ardent thirst for distinction, his vivid imagination glowing with the brightest day dreams, bade a tender farewell to his college companions and friends, especially his beloved host Scipio

Gonzaga, and departed amidst the general regret of the whole university, and, revisiting first his father at Mantua, where he fell ill, but speedily recovered, arrived toward the end of October, A.D., 1565, at the Court of Ferrara, ordained to be the scene of his unrivalled success, and then of his unrivalled oppression and affliction.

CHAPTER VI.

COURT LIFE—PROSPERITY.

TASSO was twenty years of age when he reached Ferrara, but appeared older than he really was. He was very tall, of strong and active frame, of stately carriage, a little short-sighted, and with a slight hesitation in his speech, but of that grave and melancholy beauty which is said to be most attractive in men. He excelled in all warlike and knightly exercises. He had mastered all the learning of the times, and though somewhat addicted to taciturnity, and gloominess, and occasionally very absent,

could, when he pleased, throw the greatest brilliancy and charm, both of manner and eloquence, over his carriage and conversation in society. Add noble birth, a name already blazoned over the whole of Italy, the highest reputation for honour, as well as genius, at that early age, and the expectation of a yet more glorious future, and such a character stands before us as could scarcely fail of attracting the favour and affection of his patrons, and all the distinguished personages of the Ferrarese court, and of awakening dangerous envy and jealousy in the hearts of those courtiers whom he eclipsed, and perhaps more dangerous attachment in the breast of those of the other sex, into whose intimate society he was thrown.

The House of Este, one of the oldest historical families in Europe, and the oldest, except perhaps the House of Savoy, which have retained sovereign power to the present day, was at this time at the height of its grandeur and renown.

It would be difficult, except for a poet or a herald's office, to trace up its genealogy to the Trojan fountain which Ariosto and Tasso assign to it. It was probably in reality of Lombard origin, springing from one of the Dukes or Marquesses who governed the northern provinces of Italy, under the Carlovingian sovereigns. Oberto was the first who acquired any permanent territories.

Berengarius II., elected King of Italy about A.D. 950, bestowed on him several fiefs of Tuscany and Lunigiana. He deserted the cause of Berengarius, on some offences received or imagined, and joined with other Italian nobles in procuring the election of Otho of Saxony to the sovereignty of Italy.

By Otho he was appointed Count of the Sacred Palace, and espoused his daughter, Alda. Albertazzo, his grandson, besides his paternal fiefs in Tuscany and Lunigiana, inherited from an uncle, named Ugo, the fiefs of Este, Rovigo,

and Casal Maggiore in Lombardy. The name of the first of these fiefs became hereditary from henceforth in the family, though these territories fell for a time under the dominion of Venice. Albertazzo was appointed Governor of Milan by the Emperor Henry III., and married Cunegonda, of the great German House of Welf, and sister to Welf III., whose inheritance, as he died without issue, devolved on the eldest son of Albertazzo, by Cunegonda. He became Duke of Bavaria with the name of Welf IV., about A.D. 1070, and from him the line of Brunswick and Hanover, called the Este Guelphs, and by consequence our own royal family, is descended.

Albertazzo, on the death of his first wife, married the Countess of Maine; his eldest son, by her, inherited his Italian States, and assumed the title of Marquis d'Este, in which he was succeeded by his son Obizzo. He, by carrying off Marcherella, heiress of the

Adelardi, the popular leaders of Ferrara, and marrying her to his son Azzo, obtained dominion, or at least the chief authority, over that city. Azzo was afterwards appointed Vicar, or Lord of Ferrara by the citizens themselves, the first instance, it has been remarked, of a free Italian city submitting itself to a prince, and the beginning of those numerous principalities into which Italy, by degrees, was parcelled out.

Azzo the Seventh, or Fifth, according to Ariosto, was one of the leading chiefs of the Guelph party against the Emperor Frederic II., and was mainly instrumental in the failure of his attack on Parma, and subsequent defeat. He also commanded the Guelph forces collected by Pope Alexander IV., to deliver Italy from the horrible tyrant Eccelino, Lord of Bassano and Captain of the Veronese Marches, head of the Ghibeline party, and general for the Emperor.

Eccelino resisted them successfully at first, and massacred ten thousand Paduans amongst other victims, who had run tumultuously to join the Papal army. He was afterwards, however, deserted by the Brescians, and other of his supporters, disgusted at his monstrous crimes. His victorious enemies made him prisoner. He refused to speak, and, tearing open his wounds, died on the eleventh day of his captivity.

For these services Azzo was confirmed by the Pope in his sovereignty of Ferrara, which, indeed, the popes always considered, and, when they could, claimed as a fief appertaining to the Holy See, and which, after the death of Alfonso II., without lineal heirs, they succeeded in appropriating. He began that patronage of learning and poetry, his house being a favourite resort of the Provençal troubadours, for which his family was ever afterwards distinguished.

His successors obtained the lordships of Reggio and Modena, Faenza and Adria.

Lionel and Borso, however, two illegitimate brothers, were the main authors of the greatness of the d'Este. Borso especially, "fame of his age," as Ariosto names him, advanced it to its height by the mildness, and justice, and energy of his government, his continued patronage of the arts, and his favour with both the Emperor Frederic III. and Pope Paul II., by whom he was dignified with the ducal title in Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio. He was able to put down the numerous conspiracies formed against him, of which, indeed, an epidemic raged at this time over all Italy. He transmitted his large and flourishing principality to his legitimate brother, Ercole I., whom he had called from Naples, and treated with the greatest friendship and kindness, abstaining from marriage that the inheritance might devolve on him.

Ercole maintained and increased the renown of his family, both "in peace and arms." He drained marshes, banked rivers, and adorned his cities—especially Ferrara—with palaces and theatres, where some of the first scenical entertainments, among others, a translation of the "Menæchmi" of Plautus, were acted before him. And Ferrara, from his time, was one of the four cities (the others were Rome, Milan, and Naples) where theatrical representations were annually exhibited. Boiardo, author of the "Orlando Innamorato," Tebaldeo, and Collenuccio, the dramatical translators, the Duke himself sharing in their labours, and other men of note, frequented his court. He was a diligent collector of manuscripts and antiquities, and had even a Hebrew press established in his capital. He began, also, that system of festivals and hunting-parties, tournaments, and pageants, in which the d'Este sovereigns bore the palm of elegance, if not of

magnificence, from the whole of Italy, and which was kept up by his successors whenever it was possible, till the extinction of their dominion. He was, moreover, a good politician, subtle and wary, as were all his race, and contrived to keep his territories tolerably free from that nearly universal desolation which enveloped Italy during the contest between the Austrian and French sovereigns.

Alfonso I., equal, if not superior, in talent and policy, had even a more difficult part to play. He could not help joining, as an ally of France, in the league of Cambray against Venice; in return the Venetians cruelly ravaged his territories, lying, as they did, in their immediate vicinity, and threatened with a large fleet to destroy Ferrara itself. The Cardinal Ippolito, Alfonso's brother, and scarcely his inferior in warlike capacity, but most famous for his noted scoff at Ariosto, contrived hastily

to man the banks of the Po, which the Venetians were ascending, with the Ferrarese artillery, the best served at this time in Europe, and either sunk or took almost the whole Venetian fleet, returning with them in that triumph which Ariosto has chaunted.

When Julius, changing his policy, reconciled himself with the Imperialists and Venetians, he attacked the Duke of Ferrara with the most determined and bitter enmity, and with all the arms temporal and spiritual which he could launch upon him. It was on a vain mission to divert the anger of the furious and war-like Pope, that Ariosto, as he mentions, was sent to Rome, and was glad to escape with a whole skin from the audience. Alfonso, however, weathered the storm, although he lost, at first, Reggio and Modena, and saved Ferrara with difficulty. He commanded the vanguard of the French army in the famous and sanguinary battle of Ravenna, and his artillery contributed

to the severe defeat which the Imperialists then experienced. Leo X. renewed the Papal attempts on Ferrara, but without success; and at last Alfonso made his peace with Charles V., recovering by a large sum of money his former sovereignty of Modena and Reggio.

His reign, nevertheless, was troubled, and his peace of mind taken from him by the conspiracy of his two illegitimate brothers to murder him, on his refusal to grant one of them justice on Ippolito for a most grievous insult. This conspiracy was discovered, and those engaged in it imprisoned for life.

The mother of Alfonso and Ippolito was Leonora, daughter of the King of Naples, whose sister, Beatrice, was married to the great Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary. Their sister espoused Ludovico Sforza, the subtle and unfortunate Duke of Milan. Alfonso's wife was the celebrated, or notorious Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Alexander VI., a paragon

of infamy, by most accounts,* before ; of excellence, by all accounts, after her marriage. He had five sons by her. By a wise and liberal administration, he repaired the damage which had been inflicted on his territories. His dominions extended from the Adriatic to the Gulf of Genoa. He and his spouse were celebrated for their encouragement of literature and art. His renown in war was great. Large revenues accrued to him from the salt-pits of Comdacchio, and from other sources. The alliances of his family were princely and royal. Yet notwithstanding all these distinctions, he would be comparatively unknown were it not for his patronage of Ariosto, as his grandson would be still less notorious in history, if it were not for the dependance of Tasso's fortunes on his house.

It certainly is a remarkable distinction to have been the hosts of two such great poets,

* Mr. Roscoe has gallantly undertaken her defence: see his notes to his "Life of Lorenzo."

not to speak of Guarini also, and an evidence, perhaps, of the discernment and taste hereditary in the d'Este family.

O bene accorti principi e discreti,
Che seguite di Cesare l' esempio,
E gli scrittor vi fate amici, donde
Non avete a temer di Lete l' onde!*

* Poets have always claimed the power of conferring immortality, and endeavoured sometimes to profit by their power.

Πρέπει δ' ἑσλοῖσιν ὑμνεῖσθαι καλλίσταις ἀοιδαῖς
τοῦτο γὰρ ἀθανατὸν τιμαῖς ποτιψάνει μόνον,
θνάσκει δ' ἐπιλασθὲν καλὸν ἔργον.

Pindar, Fragm.

εἴπερ τι φιλεῖς ἀκοὰν ἀδεῖαν ἀιὲι κλύειν
μὴ κάμνε λιὰν δαπαναῖς.

Pind. Pyth. I. 175.

See also Olymp. X. 91. Pyth. III. 114.

Vixer fortes ante Agamemnona
Multe: sed omnes illacymabiles
Urgentur ignotique longâ
Nocte carent quia vate sacro.

Hor. c. iv. 19.

It was more fortunate, however, for the immortality of the sovereigns, than for the bards who gave it them. Ariosto, indeed, had only occasion for a few loud, but good-natured, murmurs at the narrowness of his allowance, or his exile to the wild government of Garfagnana. The theme of our history had far other reasons for far other lamentations.

Ercole II. inherited from Alfonso I. all the motives to pride which have been enumerated above, and bequeathed them, with the addition of another royal alliance, as he married Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII., to his son Alfonso II. And this prince again was about still further to augment the grandeur of his house, by espousing, for his second wife, Barbara, Archduchess of Austria, when Tasso reached Ferrara to enter the service of Ippolito, the second Cardinal then living of the d'Este family.

The city and court, princes and people, were

so intent on their preparations, that it was as much as the young poet could manage to be noticed, and provided with lodgings by his patron. The Duke inherited from his ancestors even more than their usual taste and talent. He was very wealthy. No expense was spared. No city except Florence could compete in splendour with Ferrara. The occasion, and the rank of the bride, demanded every possible exertion.

It was exactly the age when knighthood was dying indeed, but still shaking above its head, so to speak, not "the fragment of a blade," but a gilded casque and waving plume. Chivalry was expiring in a blaze of pageantry. Spacious lists, wounds and gore, hard knocks and rough tumbles, were going out of fashion. Decorations, and gold, and silver, and velvet, and feathers, and housings, and embroidery, Venus and Cupid, fauns, and nymphs and sirens, Apollo and his Muses, and figures of Virtues

or Vices, Faith or Unbelief, jostled with the gorgeous and gay companions in the bloodless arena. The best architects, and sculptors, and painters, did not disdain to raise, arrange, or decorate the artificial temples, gardens, groves, or other necessary structures. The best musicians were collected from the whole of Europe. The most celebrated poets exerted all their powers for the songs and interludes which accompanied and explained the proceedings. Theatrical entertainments, hunting parties, and hawking or fishing parties, tourneys, and concerts, and dances, were made objects of life for a time.

On this occasion, to do honour to the bride, and her sister Giovanna of Austria, destined to be bride of Francesco de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Rome sent two of its greatest Cardinals, Carlo Borromeo and Ferrerio, the latter of whom accompanied Barbara to Ferrara. Thither also came the Cardinals of Madruccio,

Correggio, and Este, the ambassadors of Venice, Poland, Florence, Lucca; those of the other European sovereigns not having yet arrived. There were the Duke and Duchess of Mantua, their sons the Counts Cesare and Vespasiano Gonzaga, the Counts of Mirandola and Novellara, and a multitude of other lords and ladies from the whole of Italy. Crowds of gentle and noble attendants thronged to lackey their pleasure. The ingenuity of wit, the powers of fancy, the treasures of history, the brains of scholars of every place around, and even of distant countries, had been racked to imagine their proper ornaments and devices.

The bridal procession halted outside the city, at the beautiful garden and palace of the Duke, in the island of Belvedere. The river was covered with innumerable barks, whose crews and awnings and linings, glittered, and sparkled with cloth of gold and jewels. Citizens and foreigners assembled far and wide to witness the

dazzling spectacle: On the morrow, the first day of December, the procession resumed its progress, and the bride entered Ferrara.

After a short respite, on the fifth day, a series of fêtes ensued. It began with a tournament in the court of the Archducal palace. It is a gloomy place now, as, indeed, is the whole city of Ferrara. It was gay enough then. There was a square theatre raised in it, divided by the lists, where a hundred cavaliers of Ferrara displayed their skill and valour. Then followed balls, and banquets, and musical entertainments. On the eleventh, the day of the wedding, after its celebration, the spectators beheld, with amazement, another far more splendid tournament, called the tournament of the "Temple of Love," in a most magnificent amphitheatre specially erected for the occasion.

The eye-witnesses who have described the spectacle seem to sink under their attempts to

delineate the ingenuity of the machines, the richness of the dresses, the beauty of the actors, the loveliness of the ladies, and bravery of the champions of Ferrara, "esteemed at this time sovereign mistress of all knightly arts."

Many other similar exhibitions were in preparation, when the festivities were suddenly interrupted by news of the death of Pope Pius IV. The magnificent assemblage broke up. The Cardinal Luigi, Tasso's patron, hastened to Rome to assist at the election of the future pontiff. The Cardinal of Alessandria obtained the tiara and assumed the name of Pius V. While Luigi was at the Consistory, Torquato remained at Ferrara, acquiring the favour and good graces of Alfonso, and his principal courtiers and nobility, and especially of the two Princesses Lucrezia and Leonora.

Alfonso had three sisters, Anna considerably older than the others, married to Francis the

famous Duke of Guise. Lucrezia and Leonora were still unmarried, though the former had reached her thirty first, and the latter her thirtieth year. These three princesses were celebrated for beauty and wit, and had been brought up with the greatest care by their mother, Renée of France. They were versed in Latin and Greek, and their own country's literature, and were attached to the society of the learned, and studious in every art and science. Their mother having imbibed the opinions of the French Reformers, and on a visit which Calvin, under the assumed name of the Sieur de Heppeville, paid to Ferrara, been confirmed in them, so as to be unable to conceal them any more, was forced to give up the education of her daughters. Ercole obliged his wife to conform to the practices of the established faith for a season, and afterwards finding it impossible to hide her defection, assigned her a kind of strict

but honourable imprisonment in the castle. Her daughters, meanwhile, finished their studies in the nunnery of Corpo di Cristo.

Tasso before his arrival at Ferrara had celebrated in his "Rinaldo" all the d'Este family, and the Princess Lucrezia in particular. Leonora was prevented by indisposition from joining in society at the time of his coming, and during the festivities of her brother's wedding. Lucrezia, therefore, was the first to notice and befriend the young poet, and was the object first of those complimentary effusions which were usual in such cases.

She seems ever to have had a true and strong friendship for Tasso, so much so that some authors, Litta, in particular, have fancied, though according to the most numerous and best opinions, without any substantial grounds for the supposition, that she was actually attached to him, while he was attached to her sister.

On Leonora's recovery, Tasso was introduced to her. He had admired her portrait before; and now, as he testifies in one of his most celebrated canzoni, "on this, the first day, that the beauteous serene of her countenance met his eyes, and he beheld love walk there, if reverence and wonder had not turned his heart into stone, he would have perished with a double death."

The controverted question of their love will force itself upon us naturally later in Torquato's life, when it becomes the mysterious cause of his reverse of fortune. It is sufficient, at this time, to say that both the sisters received him into their friendship, and admitted him to their intimate society. He returned their friendship and kindness with that thankfulness, sincerity, and earnestness, which were so much his nature. He outdid all those admirers, who had before crowned them with sonnets, and other poetical compliments. He read to them, and their fair

companions, the poem which he was composing. He was twenty years of age, handsome and accomplished. He maintained that dignity and independence, which he thought due to his birth and fame, yet without ostentation or vanity. He was full of youthful fervour, and poetical melancholy. He was graceful and particular in his dress, though he always wore black. In sports, or knightly exercises, he outshone most of his peers. Notwithstanding his name and knowledge, he was remarkably open to correction, and simple, and humble in discussion. He sang well.

It is no wonder, therefore, that before envy was awakened, he was an universal favourite, or that the princesses took pleasure in his society. They procured for him a privilege, for which he was very thankful, and which, in that age, was regarded as a high distinction, the right, namely, of dining at what was called the "tavola ordinaria," that is, the daily table of

the princes themselves. The Duke also, in person, took much notice of him, and expressed deep interest in the progress of his epic. Amid these manifold encouragements, Torquato recommenced his labours with renewed vigour and increased ability. He resolved to dedicate the poem to Alfonso, and, that he might do further honour to the House of Este, to introduce the youthful Rinaldo, son of Bertoldo, a real, or imaginary ancestor of the family, as next to Godfrey himself, the hero of the story, and its principal character.

He used such diligence, that before six months were expired, he had completed six cantos. He did not the more omit any opportunity of celebrating his patron and patronesses with lyrical effusions expressly to their honour. If Madama Lucrezia had been embroidering, if Madama Leonora was unwell, if Madama Lucrezia appeared in black, if Madama Leonora's eyes were affected by a

cold, his harp was ever ready to admire, rejoice, or condole, to follow the glancing fingers, or invite the removal of the envious cloud; if his lady had been singing, his choicest melodies were at hand to re-echo and prolong the sweet tones.

The Cardinal Luigi, to whose service Tasso was immediately attached, delayed his return from Rome. He waited to be present at the congratulations, and homage, which, according to custom, the ambassador of Alfonso Francesco d'Este was deputed to offer to the new Pope. Alfonso could not go in person, partly on account of his marriage, and partly on account of his preparations to march to the assistance of the Emperor, Maximilian II., his cousin, hard pressed at this time by the Turks. Three hundred men-at-arms, six hundred horse arquebusiers, and two thousand foot-soldiers, the forces which he led, attest the greatness of Ferrara at this period.

Torquato meanwhile took the opportunity of his patron's absence to make an excursion to Padua and Mantua. At Padua he was received by his former companions, especially by his great friend, Scipio Gonzaga, with all possible demonstrations of affection. He had the pleasure of showing them the six cantos of his "Jerusalem Delivered," and of listening to their hearty commendations. Pinello, a learned naturalist, distinguished also in every branch of literature, residing privately at Padua, and one of those who opened their houses to all the scholars of the place, especially admired that novelty and majesty in Tasso's choice of words, which Aristotle judges to add such grandeur to language.

"The Ethereals" were at this time preparing to publish some of their numerous compositions, and fixed at last on their Italian poetry. They requested Tasso, as their most distinguished member, to furnish some contributions to the

work. He accordingly supplied them out of his abundant stock with thirty-eight sonnets, two madrigals, and two canzoni.

The book was published in Padua, in A.D. 1567, and afterwards reprinted in Ferrara, in 1588. He wrote also at the same time divers dialogues and orations. In one of these dialogues, which were published many years afterwards, with several alterations and improvements, he quotes some verses of his own, expressing very strongly the attachment which he had formed for some lady, on whom it was the height of daring to fix his eyes.

From Padua he went to Milan and Pavia, where he stayed a month, received everywhere with admiration and affection. At last he fulfilled his intention of visiting Mantua, where he was greeted by his father with unbounded delight, who could not sufficiently congratulate himself at seeing "his now withered laurels thus blooming afresh" upon his son's head.

He had also some intentions of passing on to Bergamo, where his aunt, the nun Afra, died about this time. It is uncertain whether he fulfilled this journey. At all events, he had soon to hasten to Ferrara, and await the return of Cardinal Luigi from Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT TO FRANCE.

As soon as he reached Ferrara, Tasso renewed his endeavours to please, and make friends of, the principal courtiers, both of the Prince and his own patron. He sought especially the affection of Benedetto Manzuoli, the favourite secretary of the Cardinal, afterwards Bishop of Reggio. As Manzuoli and others of these attendants and noblemen were men of taste and letters, poets or philosophers, wherever interests did not clash, he could not easily fail in attracting their good will.

In May, A.D. 1567, the scholars of the University of Ferrara, thankful for the Duke's unwearied exertions in its favour and aggrandisement, entertained him, the Cardinal, and the court, with a representation of a pastoral play, by Agostino Ariente, called "Lo Sfortunato." Other dramas of the same character had previously been exhibited, as the "Arethusa" of Lollio, and "Lo Sagrifizio" of Agostino Beccari. These were, however, very imperfect compositions.

Tasso was present at the exhibition of "Lo Sfortunato," and conceived the idea of ennobling and enriching this form of poetry so much, that when, some years afterwards, he executed his purpose in the beautiful pastoral drama of "Aminta," we do not wonder that Manso should speak of him as its inventor. He certainly first brought it to that perfection of which it is capable, and which has never been surpassed or equalled.

In the meanwhile he kept writing, for his pen could not rest. He had been, it seems, in love with a young lady of Mantua, whom Rosini supposes to have been Laura Peperara, though the date of their attachment is uncertain. The same critic imagines her to be identical with another Laura, attendant on the Princess Leonora, and married subsequently to the Count Annibale Turchi. This is at the least very doubtful, not to say improbable. Whoever the lady was, he celebrated her in many songs, playing often with her name of Laura, in imitation of Petrarch. He appears also to have retained all his life a touching and tender recollection of his first love, and a sincere regret at having lost her.

Another theme of his poetry, and object of that platonic affection, (if it is to be called so,) so common among the Italian bards, arrived at this time at the d'Este court, in the person of Lucrezia Bendidio. Here, however, Tasso

found a rival in this poetic admiration, in the person of Giambatista Pigna, the Duke's secretary, a man of learning, and an historian of some pretensions, but a greatly inferior poet.

Wishing not to oppose, but, on the contrary, to flatter this important antagonist, at the advice, it is said, of the Princess Leonora, Tasso withdrew from the poetic battle-field, and instead of overwhelming his antagonist with showers of irresistible song, undertook to comment upon some of his writings, and explain their excellencies. He dedicated this commentary to Leonora. In it he fixes upon three pieces of poetry called "the Three Sisters," in which earthly and divine love are compared together. He proclaimed his admiration of that talent which could succeed so well with the Muses, in the midst of so many various occupations; and "perhaps (he concludes) I shall transfuse from the canzoni that spirit of which they are full, into myself; so that, inspired by the

charms of Signora Lucrezia, I shall write not unworthily of her image."

In the commentary, or considerations, he institutes a comparison between Petrarch and Pigna, giving the palm of prudence and caution to the former; declaring that Pigna, on the other hand, attacks every difficulty in the subject, and "as it were doing violence to the nature of things, displays the force of his lively imagination in subjects hitherto barren, and in themselves scarcely capable of adornment." "He shuns not the concourse of the vowels ea, eu, ou, oo, as Petrarch, and Bembo, and Socrates, of old, remembering that the orator was judged by Demetrius Phalereus to lose thereby in majesty what he gained in sweetness."

It is impossible to help feeling that Tasso, while he is satisfying and flattering Pigna, is all the time cleverly laughing at him in his sleeve, and probably turning him into ridicule

with the Princess also. But this is dangerous work, however amusing.

Soon after this, he gave a safer and public demonstration of the readiness of his talents, the extent of his knowledge, and the nobility of his sentiments, in the "Defence of Fifty Conclusions or Points of Love," held openly in the Academy of Ferrara, turned for the occasion into a theatre of fair ladies, and courteous cavaliers, assembled to behold this tournament of wit. It was a kind of revival of the old Provençal courts of "Love."

For three days Tasso kept the lists against all comers. "Who," he asks, "in this battle-field, could overcome an enamoured poet, and with what arms vanquish him, his lady herself sitting by, from whom he could easily receive the victory in each duel?" His bravest adversary in this conflict was a lady, the Signora Orsina Bertolaja Cavalletti, of great renown in literature and philosophy, who came off on equal terms, if

not with flying colours, in her contest with Tasso on that great question, whether Man, in his nature, loves more intensely or constantly than Woman?

These engagements, strange as they now seem, were still not unusual in that age. In the earlier ages of the Troubadours, the sessions of the courts were as regular as our circuits, and the laws of the conflict most strictly observed. The mixture of philosophy, compliment, and love, displayed on this particular occasion, is yet stranger than the meeting. But perhaps the strangest thing of all is, that twenty years later, after so many and such deep sufferings, Tasso should throw into a serious dialogue the various arguments used in the dispute. The dialogue is entitled "Il Cataneo (a particular friend of Tasso's) ovvero delle Conclusioni," and is one of his most admired compositions in this class of writing.

This exhibition increased Tasso's reputation and interest with the nobles of Ferrara, brought him probably further into the friendship of the Princess Leonora, whom he doubtless intended by his Lady, and perhaps encouraged the object of his more open compliments to marry, as we find Lucrezia Bendidio soon espousing a cavalier of the House of Machiavelli, and becoming one of the fairest and most esteemed matrons in the d'Este court. Her memory, however, only survives as the object of a poetic rivalry between two such poets as Tasso and Guarini, who presently entered the arena against him.

From the midst of these youthful gaieties Torquato was suddenly summoned to attend the dying bed of his father. He hastened to Ostia on the Po, where Bernardo was governor for the Duke of Mantua, and found him not only worn out by age, and suffering from sickness, but reduced to a most deplorable condition

by the neglect and dishonesty of his servants, who had robbed, and deserted him in his necessity. Bernardo's malady rapidly increased after his son's arrival; and on the 4th of September he died, to the deep grief of Torquato, and the great regret of the Duke of Mantua, his patron. By that prince's order, his body was transferred to Mantua, and buried in the church of St. Egidio in that city, under a marble monument, with the simple inscription,

OSSA BERNARDI TASSI.

This, however, did not long remain; it fell among the sepulchres, which were removed, or broken down, when Pope Gregory XIII. published an order for the demolition of all tombs, much elevated above the pavement, judging that they interfered with the reverence due to the altar. Bernardo's bones were next transferred to the church-yard, and there interred

for a while without any mark of distinction. Torquato complains of this neglect to the Cardinal Albano:

> Alban! as yet my father's bones no tomb
> Of marble white, or foreign, hath inurn'd,
> With noble prose, or graceful rhyme adorn'd;
> The deep earth shuts them in her rayless womb.

The Duke of Mantua gave also commandment that two door-curtains, belonging to Bernardo, with the arms of the Tassi and Rossi upon them, should be preserved in his wardrobe, as a memorial of so faithful and esteemed a servant, where Manso saw them several years afterwards amongst the valuable commodities exhibited to visitors.

The anxiety which Torquato had experienced in his attendance on his father, and the grief for his loss, which possessed his affectionate heart, threw him into a dangerous illness. On his recovery, he returned sorrowfully to Ferrara.

Here an event occurred, which had probably considerable influence over his fortunes.

The two Dukes of Ferrara and Urbino were very desirous of an alliance between their families. It was proposed that Francesco, Guidobaldo's eldest son, should marry Lucrezia, Alfonso's sister. The only difficulty was the discrepancy of their ages, as Lucrezia was fifteen years older than Francesco. On a visit, however, which the young Prince of Urbino paid to Ferrara, the charms, if not beauty, of Lucrezia's person, and conversation, overcame this obstacle. Cesare Gonzaga was, therefore, sent first to espouse her, as Francesco's representative, and before the midsummer of A.D. 1570, he himself fulfilled his engagement.

The nuptials were honoured with a fine canzone by Tasso, who was rewarded with several favours and gifts by the two spouses, especially by Lucrezia, ever affectionately disposed

towards him. After her departure, Tasso and Leonora were thrown more into each other's society, and he began to display his attachment to her more openly, and to court her with more assiduity. It is but natural also to think that Leonora, on her part, having lost the greatest of all supports, the presence and love of a sister with whom she had grown up, and from whom she had never been separated, should derive much comfort from the society of Tasso, who had been such a favourite with them both.

Still, no surmise of anything, more than the usual devotion of an attendant, appears to have gone abroad up to this period. And when Ferrara, in the autumn of A.D. 1570, was terrified by repeated shocks of an earthquake, and consequent inundations of the river, which were repeated at intervals during the last two months of this year, Leonora was in such reputation for honour and piety, that the compli-

mentary poets of the day do not shrink from ascribing the deliverance of the city to her prayers.

Torquato, however, never intermitted the advancement and improvement of his great poem. He finished several more cantos before the conclusion of the year, although not in continuous order; for, having the whole plan perfectly arranged in prose, he could compose and decorate with the charms of poetry any particular part of his subject, which fired his imagination. The tender and touching episode of "Sofronia and Olindo" is supposed, with every degree of probability, to be intended as an allusion to Leonora and himself, and may very likely have been written at this time. The line

"Much he desires, hopes little, nothing claims,"

seems, in particular, a very significant expression of his humble devotion. He had also an

opportunity of displaying his powers of eloquence in an oration at the opening of the Academy of Ferrara. In this, after praising the commercial activity, and the cultivation of the country, he proceeds to magnify the greatness of the city and its princes, especially their military renown, paying the highest compliments—and not without good ground—to the reigning duke.

"If ever the science of arms flourished in this city; if it ever was in high repute; if it ever struck envy, and wonder, and terror into foreign nations, now in your reign, oh! magnanimous Alfonso! it has reached the very summit of perfection. For, by rewards, and honours, and wise instructions, and by signal examples of new and unusual military skill, you make your people such, that you ought as much to be satisfied with your subjects, as they to glory in their prince. There seems, then, nothing wanting now to this city's

complete perfection, except that the study of literature should flourish here with equal glory, and equal throngs of followers; for which purpose, many men of nobility and learning have just united together, and instituted this Academy."

Presently, however, Tasso was summoned to leave Ferrara for a season, in order to accompany his patron into France. The Cardinal d'Este held in that country the Archbishopric of Auch, and several abbeys and other preferments, which he was desirous of visiting. He was likewise to exert himself against the Hugonots, and help forward the interests of the Catholic religion.

Charles IX., dark and gloomy as was his character, was a patron of literature, and a poet himself. His court, also, was filled with authors and poets of inferior rank, of whom the celebrated Ronsard was the most distinguished. It was natural, therefore, that the

Cardinal d'Este should desire the company of so renowned a bard as Tasso, especially as, in his "Jerusalem Delivered," the princes and nobility of France were among the chief subjects of his muse. Tasso executed, before he left, a remarkable memorial, intended apparently for a will. It runs as follows:

"Because life is uncertain, if it pleases God to dispose otherwise of me in my journey to France, I pray the Signor Ercole Rondinelli, to take care of some of my effects; and first, as regards my compositions, that he should gather and publish my own amatory sonnets and my madrigals. The rest, whether amatory or on other subjects, which I have made for the service of a friend, I desire should rest buried with myself, except that one which begins 'Or che l'aura mia dolce altrove spira.'

"The 'Oration' which I made at Ferrara at the opening of the Academy, I should wish

to see the light, and also my four books on Heroic Poetry. Of my "Gottifredo," (the 'Jerusalem Delivered'), the last six cantos, and of the two first, those stanzas which shall be judged least imperfect, if truly all these works are reviewed and considered beforehand by Signor Scipio Gonzaga, Signor Domenico Veniero, Signor Batista Guarino, who, for the friendship and servitude which I have with them, will not, I persuade myself, refuse this trouble. I wish them also to know that my intention is, that they should cut out, and strike off without sparing, anything which they judge inferior or superfluous. But in adding or changing they should proceed with greater caution, as the poem cannot appear, except in an imperfect condition.

"Of my other compositions, if to the same Signor Rondinello and the above-mentioned Signori, any should appear not unworthy of seeing the light, I leave it to their judgment to dispose of them. My effects which are in pawn

with Abram—for twenty-five lire, and seven pieces of tapestry which are in pawn with Signor Ascanio for thirteen scudi, and these which are in this house, I desire should be sold, and with the money that remains, that an epitaph should be made for my father whose body lies in St. Paul's; and that the epitaph should be that which is hereunder written. And if any difficulty should arise, the Signor Ercole shall have recourse to the most excellent Madama Leonora, who for my love will be liberal.

"I, Torquato Tasso, have written this.
Ferrara, A.D. 1573.

BERNARDO TASSO MUSAR. OCIO ET PRINCIPUM
NEGOTIIS SUMMA INGENII UBERTATE ATQUE
EXCELLENTIA. PARI FORTUNÆ VANITATE
AC INCONSTANTIA RELICTIS UTRIUSQUE IN-
DUSTRIÆ MONUMENTIS, CLARISSIMO
TORQUATUS FILIUS POSUIT.
VIXIT ANNOS SEPTUAGINTA ET SEX. OBI AN. MDLXIX.
DIE IV. SEPTEMB."

The date, 1573, is certainly a mistake for

1570, and from the will it appears that the remains of Bernardo had been transferred from S. Egidio in Mantua, to the church of St. Paul, in Ferrara, through the interest, doubtless, of the Cardinal d'Este. From his continual poverty and the misfortunes which soon overwhelmed him, poor Tasso could never execute his filial intention of marking his father's burial-place with the above or any other epitaph.

There are two or three facts of much importance for the elucidation of Tasso's subsequent history in this remarkable testament. First, it seems to indicate a state approaching to poverty. His patrons appear to have been by no means liberal to him. He was, though careless about money and very bountiful when he could, yet never profuse or extravagant. He was extremely particular about running into debt, and hated all gambling and wastefulness.

Here we find him with clothes and furniture

in pawn, and nothing to dispose of except the goods in his house. This rather confirms Balzac's story, questioned by Serassi out of flattery towards the d'Este family, of his destitution in Paris, which will come before us presently. It appears also very strange, that he should provide so carefully for the destruction of some poetry, which he had written for a friend. That he should spare his own amatory verses, and yet destroy these seems unaccountable, except the pretended friend was a disguise for compositions of his own which he did not wish recognized as such. The importance of these observations will be more apparent afterwards. Meanwhile, we need only further notice the humility of true genius apparent in his submission of his poem to the judgment of his friends.

At the close of the year, A.D., 1570, Tasso, as proposed, accompanied the Cardinal Luigi into France, and was presented by him to the

King, his cousin, as the bard of Godfrey and the other French heroes, who had signalized their valour and piety in the conquest of Jerusalem. All the time that he was at Paris, Charles and his Court shewed Tasso many marks of esteem and affection.

He found that his reputation was not confined to Italy. The bards and scholars of France were anxious to testify their admiration of his poetical works and philosophical attainments. Ronsard especially, whom Tasso seems to have appreciated very highly, caressed him with every possible mark of regard. In one of his dialogues entitled, "Il Cataneo," or "of Idols" he compares a sonnet of Ronsard's in honour of the House of Valois with a famous sonnet of Caro's, commencing "Come to the shade of the great golden lilies," and assigns the palm of selection of materials and sublimity of expression to the French bard.

Ronsard submitted to his judgment a new

edition of his works which he was publishing; he in return read to him several of his works, especially his "Jerusalem," in which he had lately made considerable progress. For such was the activity of Tasso's mind, and such the strength of his memory, that he composed on horseback, or in inns, or in society, and sometimes carried as many as three hundred stanzas in his head at once. As a mark of his favour with the French monarch, and of his affection for fellow-disciples of the Muses, the following rather pointless story is told.

Charles having condemned a man to death who was a tolerable poet, but indifferent character, Tasso, touched with compassion, resolved to intercede for him. He came to the Louvre, but heard that Charles had ordered the criminal's immediate execution, and sworn that he would not forgive him at any one's persuasion. Tasso, not discouraged, presented himself before the King with a gay and cheerful

countenance. "Sire," he said, "I am come to implore your Majesty to put to death a wretch, who by his scandalous fall has shown that the frailty of human nature easily tramples on all the instructions of philosophy." Struck with the observation, it is said, and the new method of entreaty, (not very moving, most would think,) the King accorded the criminal's pardon on the spot. Charles would also, it is said, have heaped gifts on Tasso. But the poet steadily refused them, notwithstanding that he was certainly poor, as he always was; and if Balzac's story be true, which seems far from improbable, absolutely in such a state of distress, that he was obliged to ask for the charitable assistance of a lady of his acquaintance.

"It is unlikely," says Serassi, "that a Prince so rich and splendid as was the Cardinal d'Este, would suffer so noble a courtier to be reduced to such straits." Nevertheless, from Tasso's will, it is evident, that he could scarcely support

himself at Ferrara, notwithstanding the help which his other patrons gave him. The princes, indeed, and patrons of the age, seem in general to have expended so much on their own splendour and magnificence, that they had nothing left for their dependants, especially their poetical dependants. Tasso, moreover, was beginning to be desirous of quitting the service of the Cardinal, or rather of returning to Ferrara. He speaks, in one of his letters, as if Luigi were angry with him, but no sufficient reason appears why he should be so.

The other attendants of the Cardinal, Serassi thinks, were provoked to envy by the caresses heaped on him at the French court. Perhaps he withdrew his usual allowances, or gave other tokens of displeasure, when he became acquainted with Tasso's wish to leave him. Whatever was the cause, Tasso requested his dismissal, and the Cardinal granted it, wishing him, however, to wait a little, in order that he might

accompany Manzuoli, his secretary, whom he was about to despatch on a mission to Rome. Then the Cardinal was seized with the gout, and could not spare his secretary so soon as was expected. But in December, they left France together, and arrived at Rome, where Tasso was kindly and honourably entertained in the house of the Cardinal of Ferrara on M. Giordano, the uncle of Alfonso and Luigi.

His own fame, and his father's favour with this Prince, ensured him a favourable reception. This treatment seems rather to disprove the reality of his patron's indignation, or to show that it was a transient and evanescent feeling. At Rome, amongst other friends, the Cardinal Albano, Tasso's fellow-countryman, lately advanced to the purple by Pius V., and his secretary, Maurizio Cataneo, paid him most signal marks of esteem and affection. This last, as we have noticed, was one of his oldest and dearest friends; and to the regard of the

Cardinal Albano, he was afterwards much indebted in his hour of distress. He had also the honour of kissing the Pope's feet, by whom he was much noticed, and whose praise he chaunted in a fine Latin ode. It shews how well he could have succeeded in classical poetry if he had devoted his attention to it.

Meanwhile, the poet had been using every means in his power to obtain a situation in the service of Alfonso. The two Princesses, Lucrezia, now of Urbino, and Leonora, contributed their exertions, as did also the Cardinal Albano. Tasso attributes his success principally to the Princess of Urbino, in a letter of thanks which he wrote to her.

Her kind efforts to assist him, in this object, are surely sufficient to overthrow any notion of her feeling anything more than friendship toward him; as, if she did, it is very unlikely that she would have assisted to throw him again into the society of Leonora, to whom, she must

have known, he entertained a strong attachment. Leonora's assistance he could not well notice so openly, although there seems every reason to think that it was as earnest and effectual as her sister's. The Duke, accordingly, who well knew Tasso's merits, and was fond of him himself, appointed him one of his gentlemen, with a monthly salary of fifty lire and ten solidi, equivalent to about fifteen golden crowns, and with other honourable conditions; exempting him, at the same time, from any particular duties, that he might have freedom and leisure for his studies, and especially for the completion of his great poem. For this liberty and peace, Tasso thanks Alfonso in that beautiful speech of Tirsis in the "Aminta," for in the character of Tirsis he undoubtedly represents himself.

Dafne! to me a god this ease has given,
He whom a god we here must deem, for whom
Here feed the countless herds, and countless flocks
From one to th' other sea, in pleasant meads

Of the rich cultur'd champaign, or along
The alpine back of ridgy Apennine.
To me he said, when me his own he made,
Tirsis, let others chase the wolves, the thieves,
And guard my high-wall'd folds. Let others part
My labourers' tasks and wages, others feed
And watch the flocks, and others safely store
The wool, the milk, and others give them forth.
Sing thou, and take thy leisure! Whence 'tis meet
I should not sing the sports of earthly love,
But him my living, and my true—I know not
Which he is worthiest named—Phœbus or Jove.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AMINTA—FEAR.

Of his stay in France, Tasso has left some memorials in a comparison between France and Italy, which he wrote at the request of Count Ercole di Contrari, a Ferrarese nobleman. He had visited parts of Burgundy and the Lyonnese, and made a considerable sojourn at Paris. He had not seen the rest of the kingdom. He, therefore, requests that his opinions may be regarded as those of one ill-acquainted with the subject, and also put together amidst the confusion and bustle of a court.

He complains of the French wines; "though it may be," he says, "a fault in my palate to prefer the sweet and rough wines of Italy to those of this country, which seem all to me of one taste." However, he observes, that through the badness of the season, the French wines were not so good as usual. He speaks in very disparaging terms of the cultivation of crops, whether of grain or grass. He declares that the Italian cities are far superior to the French, the houses in France being mostly of wood, and built without any plan or taste. Internally, they were altogether deficient in accommodation, except the winding stairs could be called a convenience, whose narrowness and continued twistings and twinings made the head swim. The apartments were mostly dark and melancholy.

But of the churches in France, he speaks in raptures, both for their number, and grandeur, and magnificence. Still, according to the Italian taste, he complains that the architecture

is somewhat barbarous, and that the builders had rather regarded solidity and permanency than elegance or grace. In pictures and statues, the Italian churches were also far superior. One wonders that Tasso did not rise above the taste of his contemporaries by a still fuller appreciation of the beauties of Gothic architecture. He does, indeed, say more in its favour than would have been generally maintained at the time, or than was afterwards said by Fenelon, and the scholars and critics of his period; nevertheless, from such a refined judgment and devout spirit as Tasso's, it is natural to hope for a more favourable opinion.

He institutes afterwards a remarkable comparison between Paris and Venice, which, not having seen Florence, he chooses among the Italian cities to contrast with the French capital. Venice, he judges, would be thought the most marvellous, were it not for the preference which men often give to that which

is foreign. What a mockery would the comparison be now!

Muoiono le città, muoiono i regni.

Though even in its decay, the silent, melancholy grandeur of poor Venice is unrivalled. He finally blames the French nobility for leaving the study of literature and philosophy to the lower classes.

"For philosophy," he says, somewhat aristocratically, "as a royal lady married to a serf, when treated of by plebeians, loses much of its natural grace, and from a free inquirer after the reasons of things, becomes dull and powerless, and from a queen ruling the spirits of men, is degraded into a minister of sordid arts, and of the avarice of gain. Plato had observed this long ago in his Republic, and from experience, I know that his reasonings are well-founded." Italy, I fear, would not bear the

comparison at present, whatever she may do some time hence, if she succeeds in recovering her native energy.

Tasso also wrote afterwards a fragment of a discourse on the sedition or civil war, that of the League, which arose in France in A.D. 1585, in which its causes and origin are discussed, and the end, which it is likely to have, foretold. It is unfinished, but gives manifest proofs of his political ability, and the perspicuity of his judgment, and of his acquaintance with the secret views of parties in France, and also, we must add, of those violent ultramontan opinions which he entertained later in life, and whose expression, in his second "Jerusalem," occasioned it to be excluded from France by an *arrêt* of the Parliament.

From France then, Tasso returned, according to one story, with the same coat on his back as when he went there a year before, certainly without any improvement in his finances. He

obtained, however, at Rome, the great object of his desire, an appointment in the court and service of the Duke of Ferrara. The years which immediately followed this appointment seem to have been the quietest and easiest of his life. He describes his favour with Alfonso in a discourse on the various accidents of his life, written from Urbino in the beginning of his misfortunes, and addressed to his great friend Scipio Gonzaga.

"He (the Duke) exalted me from the darkness of my low estate to light and reputation in his court. He relieved me from my poverty, and placed me in comfortable circumstances; he brought my works into notice by often and gladly giving ear to them, and by honouring me, who read them, with every mark of attention and favour. He counted me worthy of the honour of his table, and of his intimate society; neither did he refuse any petition which I could make him."

And, in the opening of his great poem, he has immortalized the then present kindness, and so the subsequent unkindness of the Duke in those famous stanzas, in which he praises him for "having delivered from the rage of fortune, and guided into port, himself a wandering stranger, lost, and, as it were, drowned amidst the rocks and amidst the waves;" and prognosticates for him the command of the next crusade, and the overthrow of the savage Thracian, (that is, of course, the Turk), and the recovery of his great unjust prey, (the Holy Sepulchre), if ever Christendom should be restored to peace.

In the meanwhile, he turned his leisure to account by studiously advancing and perfecting his poem, finishing and embellishing the parts already composed, filling up the intervals, inventing the episodes, and weaving the whole into its proper shape and beauty. Before long, he was called upon to exert again his powers

of pathos and eloquence, in lamenting the untimely death of Barbara of Austria, the Duke's wife, which happened in September, A.D., 1572, only seven years after those glorious nuptials, in the midst of which Tasso arrived at Ferrara.

The Duchess seems to have been a most dutiful and affectionate wife, extremely devout and charitable, and endowed with every virtue and beauty, though not apparently with any particular talent, if we may judge from the funeral orations and elegies devoted to celebrate her memory, more to be trusted in their omissions than their commendations. From the "Oration" which Tasso composed for her obsequies, it appears that she died after protracted ill-health, and long lingering pains, endured with the greatest resignation. As a monument of her charity, she left a hospital or refuge for poor young women, called, from her patron saint, the Conservatorio di Santa

Barbara. There are also a canzone and sonnet of Tasso to her memory, more stately and polished than touching.

Another calamity befell the d'Este family in the same year. The Cardinal of Ferrara, uncle of the Duke, and Tasso's kind host during his visit to Rome, died on the 2nd of December. He was famous for the magnificence of his buildings, and his patronage of the learned, several of whom were amongst his most favoured attendants, and by whom he seems to have been sincerely lamented. Tasso also composed a sonnet to his memory according to the universal custom, in which he comforts himself with the assurance that the Cardinal d'Este succeeds to his uncle's excellences and graces, as he did to his title. That prince had returned to Rome for the election of a successor to Pius V., that pontiff having died after a reign of six years: Gregory XIII. was elected to the tiara.

Tasso's life at this time sped peaceably and quietly on, his favour at court continually increasing. In A.D., 1574, the Duke appointed him to the mathematical chair in the University of Ferrara, a signal evidence of the vast extent of his acquirements, and a situation with which Tasso was much pleased, although the salary was not above fifty-two scudi. The Duke, however, only required him to lecture on festival days, so that his studies were not much interfered with. It may be remembered that in A.D., 1567, Tasso, witnessing the pastoral drama of "Agostino degli Arienti," had conceived the idea of perfecting that sort of poetry, and formed in his mind a type of what a pastoral drama should be. The composition of his epic, the fulfilment of his duties in the academy, his philosophical studies, the distractions of court service, and his attendance on his patron, had hitherto prevented him from executing his intention.

The absence of the Duke, in the early part of A.D., 1573, on a visit to Rome, giving him more than customary leisure, and leaving the court in more quietude and repose than usual, he, with his wonted rapidity and diligence, finished, in the space of two months, the pastoral drama which he had so long before conceived, and for which he had gathered out of all the pastoral authors of antiquity their choicest ideas and metaphors, and every flower of imagination and expression, either to embellish and interweave into his verse, or to suggest to him new ornaments of poesy. Hesiod, Virgil, Ovid, Theocritus, Moschus, Bion, Anacreon, the fragments of Sappho, and even the late Greek romancers all contributed to his beautiful mosaic-work. Yet so artfully and gracefully has he employed the various supplies which he borrowed, so perfectly does he take possession of other men's ideas, so skilfully does he combine them with the treasures of his own imagination,

so admirably does he harmonize all with the colour of his own fancy, and arrange all in the peculiar and stately form of poetry which he selected, and attune all with the music of perhaps the sweetest verse, which ever flowed from the harp-strings of a poet, that there is not the least appearance of plagiarism, nor any token and indication of inconsistency in the story, nor any disagreement between the subject, and the diction.

The "Aminta" is, indeed, universally esteemed the perfection of the pastoral drama; for which the Italian language, so flowing and soft in itself, and the further unusual softness which Tasso could add to it, when it pleased him, seem admirably suited. The only other Italian composition of the same kind, set in competition with it, is the "Pastor Fido" of Tasso's contemporary, fellow-courtier, and rival, Guarini. The intricacy of its plot, however, the inconsistency of its characters, the sanguinary

nature of the events, the inequality of its versification, and its great length, are generally held to render it much inferior to the "Aminta" on the whole, though a more passionate interest is felt to breathe here and there from its pages.

Guarini's drama was recited, not acted, some years subsequently at Ferrara, with great admiration and applause, much to the satisfaction of the high-spirited, but vain author. It is certainly remarkable that the d'Este family should be so fortunate in their courtiers. The two great epics, if they should be called so, of Ariosto and Tasso came out under their patronage, and the two great pastoral dramas, for which Italy is unrivalled, appeared also under the same auspices.

In his prologue to the "Aminta," Tasso declares his purpose of making the characters speak, as under the inspiration of love, in nobler language than might otherwise befit swains and rustic damsels. He also assigns to the principal

personages a celestial origin. The compliments, therefore, which he pays here and there to the royal family of Ferrara are not out of keeping with the rest of the poem.

The skill with which he introduces these compliments has been much admired. In imitation of Virgil, he describes himself, under the character of Tirsis, as visiting Ferrara, as beholding it with amazement, as hearing the harmony of swans and sirens, and as invited into the palace, neglected and vile as he was, by a man of most august and divine appearance; of whom it is doubtful whether he is greater general or knight (duce o cavaliero); and as witnessing, within, marvellous visions of beauty, goddesses, and nymphs, filling the whole abode with golden and silver glory. "I saw," he says, "Phœbus and the Muses, and among the Muses, Elpino sitting." To this bright spectacle, he attributes the higher inspiration, whereby he sang of heroes and arms, and the more sonorous

tone of his pipe which, emulous of the trumpet, fills the resounding woods. Under these disguises, he pays his court to Alfonso, and his sisters, and to Pigna, the Duke's secretary, whom he laboured, though somewhat unsuccessfully, to make his friend.

It is supposed that he alludes to Pigna's poetical attachment to Lucrezia Bendidio, in which, as we have seen, he voluntarily gave way to him, in the mutual power of Elpino and Licoris over one another; and that, in his "Jerusalem Delivered," he expresses the subtle, wary wisdom of the same officer in the character of Alete. Tasso also satirizes some enemy under the name of the envious Mopsus. This, most writers suppose to have been his father's friend, and his old teacher, Speron Sperone. That celebrated scholar was of a morose and bitter disposition. Tasso had procured for him an invitation from the Duke to enter into his service, with many tempting

offers, which Sperone had refused. He was indignant afterwards that they were not pressed on him; and Tasso mentions in his letters, that he was in consequence offended.

That Sperone, however, was lashed by this sarcasm in the drama, seems at least very doubtful, since we soon find him again on good terms with Tasso, and employed by him to criticise his "Jerusalem." There were many other secret enemies of Tasso in the court, one in particular, whom he subsequently complains of as the malicious and crafty instrument of his disgrace and ruin, and whose envy and secret machinations have more resemblance to the picture of Mopsus than the roughness and open ill-temper of Sperone.

The "Aminta," represented with all the taste and magnificence possible in the rich and splendid court of Ferrara, with the best and choicest music, the most gorgeous theatrical arrangements, and the most graceful interludes,

invented and directed by Tasso himself, filled the spectators with the greatest admiration. The whole of Italy resounded with applause. Foreign nations re-echoed the acclamations. Tasso, however, seems to have thought but little of his eclogue, as he names it, and was even unwilling that it should be published.

Accordingly it was not published till his imprisonment took from him the control over his own works. In the meanwhile, he enjoyed the renown and favour with Alfonso and the Cardinal, his brother, and, above all, the increased regard of the Princess Leonora, which this exhibition of his powers procured him. It was represented in her presence, for, doubtless, she is his lady, whom he speaks of as beholding it. To her, also, he read its touching and melting poetry in the evening recitations of the court, and in the privacy of the palace.

From this time, the origin of his misfortunes

is dated. His triumph, and renown, and favour with the royal family, awakened the jealousy and malice of the courtiers. They began to lay their trains from this moment of his prosperity. They were, for a season, carefully disguised; but, before long, their working was only too evident; and, from that hour, Tasso was never altogether free from suspicion and alarm.

His absence from Ferrara soon after this gave them freer room to develop their machinations. His kind friend, Alfonso's other sister, the Princess of Urbino, having been unable to witness the representation of the "Aminta," was desirous of hearing it from the poet's own lips. Tasso obtained leave from the Duke to comply with her request.

He was most kindly received by Lucrezia and her husband, and the other young princes of Urbino, who, with the courtiers, especially Jacopo Mazzoni, of Cesena, the learned apologist of

Dante, knew not how sufficiently to testify their admiration both of his pastoral drama and of the cantos of the "Jerusalem," which he read to them. Tasso accompanied the Prince and Princess in the summer heats to their Villa of Castel Durante. Here his time was pleasantly spent in reading to and complimenting the Princess, or in swimming, and hunting, and fishing with the Prince, for Tasso was very fond of sporting, and a great proficient in the noble art of "Venerie," in addition to all his other accomplishments.

His comfort, however, was presently disturbed by a strong feeling of jealousy at a preference which he imagined that the Princess Leonora had conceived either, as some think, for the secretary Pigna, or, far more probably, for Guarini, Tasso's rival, as he fancied, in poetry and love. But, as the whole question of his attachment to the Princess, and the cause of his imprisonment had better be discussed in one

argument, since it is a controverted point, and a tangled maze to unweave, we will defer its consideration for the present, and proceed to narrate all the other events of his history, up to the period of his accusation.

Whatever then was the motive of his hasty return, Tasso came back to Ferrara early in the autumn of A.D. 1573, loaded with favours and presents both by the Prince and Princess, with whom he had been staying. A collar of gold, and a valuable ruby, the latter of which Tasso was obliged to make use of in his subsequent distresses, were among the gifts bestowed on him by Lucrezia. Perhaps he returned to Ferrara in her train, as it appears that she visited that city to bid farewell to her brother, the Cardinal, who was on the point of starting again for France, on some transactions of importance between the Pope and the French monarch.

The regrets of the sisters at their brother's

departure were soothed by the flatteries and muse of Tasso, who composed a sonnet for this express purpose. Nothing, however, interfered with the laborious indulgence of his genius. The happy success of his pastoral inspired him with the hope of distinguishing himself equally in the higher branches of dramatic poetry. He began a tragedy. The subject was chosen in imitation of the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles. The plot, at least, is something similar. He called it at first "Galealto," a Norwegian monarch, whom he made his hero. This name he afterwards exchanged for "Torrismondo," whom he supposed King of the Goths; for after composing a fragment of this work, he discontinued it for many years, to return to his "Jerusalem;" and we must conclude very happily, since, although this first portion is reckoned superior to the rest of the play, as he afterwards completed it, it would

never apparently have been anything more than mediocre and tedious.

Nevertheless, the "Torrismondo" for a long period, in fact till Alfieri created the real Italian tragic drama, was reckoned first among Italian tragedies, so varied were Tasso's powers, and so great his application, although the rules of the age, and the difficulty of adapting Italian to the sublimity and terror of the Tragic Muse, were too great obstacles, even for him to overcome. Fortunately, therefore, after this brief diversion of his labours, he returned with double diligence to his great epic, toiling incessantly at its composition and perfection, and resolving to complete it before the close of this year (A.D. 1574). He had now written eighteen cantos, twelve only, however, to his entire satisfaction. The descriptions of encampments, sieges, and other military operations, which abound in the last canto,

gave him many opportunities of pleasing Alfonso, by consulting him as an oracle on all these matters; and not indeed without reason; for clever men like to be flattered where they deserve flattery, and Alfonso was certainly clever. Moreover, in early youth, he had sought military renown by serving in the armies of his cousin, Henry II. of France, and throughout the whole war between the Emperor and the French kings, he had repeatedly distinguished himself, both for valour as a soldier, and conduct as a commander. He was particularly skilled in the equipment of troops, and, as has been noticed, in the management of artillery. Tasso, therefore, could pay his court to him by applications for instruction without gross or empty adulation; and as the accuracy and exactness of these descriptions in his poem became at once the theme of universal commendation, his favour with the Duke naturally increased.

There is nothing which more conciliates a man of talent than to be consulted on such matters as he is conscious of understanding, and to obtain that applause which he feels to be sincere.

Charles IX., the monarch of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, died at this time in that misery and horror, which began in the spectacle of the slaughter he had directed, and increased continually to his decease. The court of Ferrara was thrown into mourning by its connexion with that sovereign. Henry of Anjou, the favourite son of Catherine of Medici, King of Poland at the time of his brother's death, having had his way to sovereignty cleared by his unscrupulous mother, succeeded to the throne of France, and was summoned to take possession of it as speedily as possible. He could not, however, pass through Italy without congratulations and pageants

The Duke Alfonso, as Henry's cousin, and a

constant ally of France, was naturally among the first to meet and salute him. Accompanied by his principal courtiers, and attended by five hundred gentlemen, he conducted Henry toward Venice, his followers all dressed in mourning, with black cloaks down to the mid-leg, marching two and two, or three and three, before their carriage, until they took boat for their passage into the city.

The Venetians exerted all their powers, and were lavish of their wealth to provide a splendid reception for the king. There were the feasts and spectacles usual on these occasions, only set forth, day after day, with more than customary magnificence, at the cost of those princely merchants. A triumphal arch, by the great architect Palladio, reared in front of the church of San Niccolo al Lido, was particularly admired. Besides the Duke of Ferrara, there were the Legate of the Pope, Cardinal Buoncompagno, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of

Savoy, and Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, assembled to do honour to Henry. Accompanied by these princes, he proceeded to Ferrara to enjoy the prodigal hospitality of the d'Este family; but, after two days' stay, he was obliged to resume his journey, by the urgent representations made to him from his mother, of the dangerous consequences which would result from any delay.

Tasso's attendance on his patron in this expedition to Venice, prevented him from working at his poem all the month of July. The unwholesome atmosphere and the great heats brought on him, in August, an attack of ague just as he was commencing the last canto. This fever and an extreme languor and debility which it left, prevented him from exerting himself till the spring of the following year. Then, however, having recovered from his disorder, he completed his task to his great satisfaction and joy. In the fulness

of his heart, he writes thus to the Cardinal Albano, his father's and his own friend:

"I hasten to inform you that, after a wearisome attack of ague, I am now, by the grace of God, perfectly recovered, and, after many long watchings, have at last brought to a conclusion my poem of 'Goffredo,' (as he called the 'Jerusalem' at first). And this freedom from illness which I already possess, and that from poetical labours, which I shall soon enjoy, delight me principally, because I can use it in any business which may conduce to your satisfaction, or which you may deign to assign me; and if, as I hope, I can, with the advice of several judicious and intelligent friends, print my poem this September, I shall then come to stay some months at Rome. This I have not hitherto judged allowable, as I have not repaid the obligations which I feel toward the most. serene Duke, my patron. This obligation will seem to me removed, in

part, by the dedication of my poem to him; and certainly many different desires draw me to Rome, but none more than the hope of paying my respects to your Lordship, and of guiding the course of my life according to your counsels. Meanwhile, I trust that, should I have any need of your favour, (which, if I have, you will hear of through Signor Scipio Gonzaga), you will freely grant me it, as is your wont."

He must have had serious reasons for projecting this change of residence; as to that Scipio Gonzaga, he writes at the same moment: "I wish to live in Rome, by all means, whether with good, or indifferent, or even bad provision, should the malignity of my fortune prevail over the favour of your Lordship and my other friends."

It is plain he had strong suspicions of impending danger; and Gonzaga, in consequence of these requests, endeavoured to con-

ciliate for him noble and powerful supporters. He had resolved, as his letters testify, to bring out his poem under the auspices of Alfonso. He was eager to accomplish this purpose. Nevertheless, such was his anxiety for perfection, and such his humility as to his own acquirements, that, although he had consulted the chief literary men of his acquaintance, during the composition of his work, he yet resolved to submit it afresh, now that it was complete, to the criticism of as many distinguished scholars, or men of taste, as he could induce to overlook and examine it. Nineteen or twenty names are enumerated as having been appealed to for this purpose. He relied, however, chiefly on the judgment of five amongst these many supervisors: Gonzaga, Nobile, Bargeo, Antoniano, and Sperone. This last, we may again remark, would scarcely have been so carefully consulted, had he been the envious Mopsus in the "Aminta."

This submission of their works to the judgment of every person of reputation and taste, is very remarkable in the great men of that age. They were not, like the Archbishop in Gil Blas, offended at the criticisms of those to whom they applied, not even when they were very severe. They were in earnest when they sought for other men's opinions; they canvassed them freely, and thoughtfully, and often adopted them, and put them into execution. Painters, sculptors, poets, historians, even when they had attained the very summit of their art; men such as Raphael, and Michael Angelo, Ariosto, and Tasso, disdained not to seek the advice and weigh the suggestions of their companions, however inferior to themselves. They spared no trouble, and even sent far and wide, on purpose to obtain the criticisms of those whose understanding and acquirements they valued.

This humility and self-possession, marks in

general of genius of the highest order, and the collection, so to speak, of the universal taste of their compatriots, was, doubtless, one of the causes of the unrivalled excellency, to which the arts attained, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Italy. Perhaps, however, this extreme carefulness conduced rather to the perfection of the more objective arts, as sculpture, and painting, and architecture, than of the more subjective, such as poetry.

The shape of a form, the colour of a cheek, the composition of a landscape, the harmony of a building, are more open to the judgments of men in general, than the poets' descriptions. It is easier to tell if a passion is well expressed in the hues of the canvas, or the lines of the marble, than in the diction and melody of verse. The more material conceptions of the artist would not be so much interfered with by anticipations of the critic's eye, as would the more spiritual reveries of the bard. His imagination

might tremble in its boldest flights, at the thought of the future sarcasm, which might be launched at it. He might prefer the even, the elegant, the unblemished, to the daring sublimity which, soaring above mortality, sometimes sinks to the dust from exhaustion and over-weariness. He might be too careful about exactness of arrangement, accuracy of expression, and polish of diction; and sacrifice to them, nerve, and vehemence, and fervour. He would shrink from the magnificent intoxication of Parnassus, for fear of exposing himself now and then to the more sober, but uninspired student at its base. Hence the sublimest poem of Italy was written much earlier, and, for the most part, in solitude and exile. In Dante, we see the rough freedom of the time, the unbridled imagination running wild amidst the unutterable terrors or splendours, which here and there burst from his pages, amidst much that is obscure, and much that is even trivial. The

force and nerve of Alfieri again, in much later times, might be accounted for upon the same principles.

That Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered" suffered from the innumerable judgments to which he submitted it; and that his genius was cramped by the anticipations of those criticisms, cannot be affirmed with certainty. There are passages, as in the voyage of the two knights in search of Armida's island, the compliment to Columbus, the famous lament over Carthage, the army's salutation of Jerusalem, the death of Soliman, the appearance of Michael, the archangel, which show that sublimity was not beyond his reach; nevertheless, that excessive finish, that antithesis which frequently mars his passionate scenes, that continued sonorousness of versification, that embellishment of language, that redundance of words, of which he is far more justly accused than of abruptness, seem partly to result from the voluntary constraint which he imposed

upon himself in appealing to so many opinions. These consequences of his own diligence, seem the causes of that appearance in his verse, which Boileau somewhat harshly designates tinsel; for the satirist rebukes those who prefer

Le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.

The world, however in general, has not confirmed this condemnation; and, indeed, Boileau himself makes some amends in another place. The beauty and harmony of the poetry, the chaste, though grand versification, the elegance of thought, the variety of expression, the nobility of sentiment, the conduct of the fable, the richness of the episodes, and, above all, the excellence of the subject in his great epic have always set Tasso on a high pinnacle in the Temple of Fame, though not in general estimation, where his admirers have placed him, on a level with Homer, or Virgil, or Milton. He

has been since often, and more fairly, compared with Ariosto, whose great romantic epic, as Ginguené names it, is thought by Tiraboschi to show a far more lively and fertile imagination, though not such evenness and polish as Tasso's regular epic. He objects to the common saying, that Tasso's poem was the best, but Ariosto the best poet; and compares the former to an admirable miniature painter, Ariosto to Giordano, or Titian, or other bold, luxuriant artists. Certainly, there is more pathos and novelty, and more distinction and energy of character in the "Orlando." But the "Jerusalem Delivered" is more perfect in its plan, and nobler in its thoughts, and perhaps bears repeated perusal better, and grows more on the liking and taste after a thorough acquaintance with it.

One of the questions most agitated between Tasso and his advisers was the admission or omission of the episode of "Sofronia and

Olindo." In these characters he is supposed (as has been noticed,) to represent himself and the Princess Leonora. There is more nature, more real feeling, displayed in their history, unconnected as it is with the general plan, than in any other part of the poem. This disconnection, and perhaps the danger of at all revealing his attachment, were represented to Tasso by his friends. He changed his mind two or three times on the point, as he tells us in his letters, but finally resolved to preserve it. Perhaps, from some renewal of his fears, and certainly in order to consult his critics orally, Tasso resorted to various cities before giving the final polish to his work. Scipio Gonzaga had sent by Luca Scalabrino, a Ferrarese gentleman, and friend of Tasso, the opinions of the Roman scholars on his "Jerusalem," but this only awakened in him a stronger desire for actual conference with his counsellors.

First he visited Padua, renewing his friendship with Pinelli, and his old and other "academies," especially that of the "Spirited," in that university. His old masters and friends were able, and delighted, to appreciate the maturity of that genius, whose young promise they had so animated by their encouragement, and several alterations, and the retention of one or two fine passages, are owing to their approval.

Tasso returned to Ferrara in the Holy Week, and in June, his suspicions being again excited by the interception of some of his correspondence with Gonzaga, he passed to Bologna for a few days. He then returned again to Ferrara, and was laid up for a short time with a sharp attack of fever. This was followed by another delay. Lucrezia, now Duchess of Urbino, parted about this time from her husband. The disparity of their age and her want of children, made the Duke

desirous of a separation. She accordingly came to Ferrara, to reside with her brother and sister, as before her marriage, making an amicable arrangement with her husband for her maintenance and dignity.

Fear of being poisoned by his command for her barrenness, has been supposed by some to have occasioned her hasty departure from Urbino, which opinion, though incapable of proof, shows at least the unscrupulous conduct considered natural among the Italian princes of that age. Her persuasions induced Tasso to put off a little while longer his purposed visit to Rome. Suspicions that he was intending a change of service were already floating in the court of Ferrara, and he had been actually urged by some of his friends, especially Scipio Gonzaga, to quit his present position, although the motives of his urgency do not appear in the correspondence.

After attending Lucrezia in her illness, an

occupation in which, he says, the Duke left him engaged, "invitus invitum," he at length obtained leave to make his proposed excursion to Rome, under the plea of being present at, and partaking in the devotions of the Jubilee.

On his arrival, Gonzaga pressed him much to close at once with offers, which he had been commissioned to make to him from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. That sovereign was not on good terms with the Duke of Ferrara. Lucrezia de' Medici, his sister, Alfonso's first wife, had for adultery real or imagined been secretly made away with; it was given out that she died of a putrid fever. There had also been a long contest for precedence between the two houses, which Pope Pius V. had at last settled in favour of the Medici, by giving Cosmo the title of Grand Duke, and the right to wear a royal crown radiated after the antique fashion, much to the disgust of the proud d'Este.

This desire of Gonzaga's looks as if he

thought it necessary that Tasso should have some protector willing and competent to protect him, after quitting Alfonso's service. The bard, however, would not be persuaded to take this step. He would only receive Gonzaga's counsels in his poem, which that prelate had taken the trouble to transcribe with his own hand. He also for two hours, every day, listened patiently to the criticisms of Speron Sperone. He had now fulfilled the proper devotions of the Jubilee, and obtained the indulgences annexed to their fulfilment. He had also exhausted his Roman friends' advice. He therefore prepared for his return to Ferrara.

Although he could not, by any representations, be moved to forsake his present patrons, he, nevertheless, visited Florence in his way home. The only advantage which he seems to have gained from this so long purposed visit to Rome, was the completion of that verse in which Erminia's descent from her horse, at sight

of the body of Tancrede, is described, and which he had been unable to express to his satisfaction. But in Rome, seeing a young man light hastily down, he felt the word come up on his lips.

Non scese, nò, precipitò di sella.

In his homeward journey he first visited Siena to consult Piccolomini and Marretti and other literati, the first of whom, as a commentator on Aristotle's poetics, he held in high estimation. Thence early in January, A.D. 1576, he proceeded to Florence, renewing his customary conferences with the most distinguished scholars in that city, and admiring its beauty and splendour, but still declining to enter into the Grand Duke's service. After a fortnight's stay he returned to Ferrara, where he found Antonio Montecatino installed as the Duke's secretary in the place of Pigna, who had died in November, just when Tasso was starting for

Rome. "The successor of the dead man," he says in a letter, "has succeeded also to his emnity towards myself. Nevertheless, I hope to turn his malice to my advantage, and I will make sport of him, and yet still please him. He shall laugh at my folly, and I at his prudence."

It was thus he had served Pigna; but, once more, the play is dangerous. It was apparently the favour of Tasso with Alfonso and the princesses, which provoked the jealousy and enmity of the secretaries. In both cases a kind of rivalry seems to have increased the dislike; for in the February of this year, two celebrated ladies, Leonora di San Vitale, bride of the Count of Scandiano, and her step-mother, the Countess of Scala, arrived at the court of Ferrara.

Both were beauties, and both distinguished for literary attainments. Both immediately became the objects of the poetical and compli-

mentary effusions of the courtiers. The matron dignity, and the hair of the Countess di Scala, arranged in a peculiar way like a crown, and the youthful grace and Austrian lip of the younger lady, were especially celebrated by Tasso himself, amongst the rest of their admirers. Indeed, to please Alfonso, as he informs us, he made this Leonora the theme of several sonnets and madrigals; so much so, that she has been reckoned an object of his real attachment, although the verses which he has left in her honour breathe evidently no other spirit than the usual high-flown poetical adoration.

All this time, however, whether at home, or on his travels, whether in ease, or disquiet, whether waking, or even sleeping, for he mentions that in his dreams some improvements suggested themselves, he was continually engaged in working up his poem to that perfection at which he aimed. He was desirous

of printing it at Venice, after the Easter of this year, (A.D. 1576). But some further corrections, which still remained to be made, and some fresh disputations, into which some of his innumerable counsellors induced him to enter, and rumours also of the plague at Venice, unfortunately prevented him from executing his intention. At this time, Gonzaga seems even more urgent with him than before to quit Ferrara for Florence, conveying to him secretly from the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Cardinal de' Medici, large pecuniary offers, and assurances of leisure and favour in their court. They were naturally anxious to steal such a gem from the crown of their bitter rivals. Tasso was much agitated between that safety, and those advantages which were thus held out to him, and his long attachment to the d'Este family, and some further more vehement affection, some stronger secret motive, which he only obscurely indi-

cates. He laments his own doubts in a letter to Gonzaga, "to whom," he says, "as to a part, and the better part of my own soul, I am not ashamed to discover the flux and reflux of my thoughts, and that irresolution, which has been, and I fear will be, the ruin of all my actions."

Meanwhile, as if to fix himself in the service of Alfonso, and to prevent himself from being driven from Ferrara, by his own fears, the arguments of his friends, and the plots of his enemies, he himself applied to that Prince for the office of historian to the court, vacant by the death of Pigna. The Duke granted his request, although somewhat coldly; and Tasso immediately used this appointment, indeed he owns that he did so, as a pretence for not complying with the persuasions of his friend, and embracing the proffered patronage of the Medici. As if to make his resolution public, he furnished his apartments anew, re-

turned open thanks to the two princesses for their promises to promote his interest with their brother, and professed that he was labouring with all his power in giving the last finishing touches to the "Jerusalem."

To vary his work, and probably to give it also a more religious character, he undertook to explain the allegory which it contained. Fortunately, he had not conceived any idea of its being an allegory, before it was finished to all intents and purposes, so that no fanciful imaginations interfere with, and chill its composition, and its poetry. His subsequent interpretation of its mysteries could not harm it. He seems to have begun the task half in sport, and to have ended it more than half in earnest, as if struck with the reality of the moral which he elicited. We see this change in two letters, the first of which he wrote when he had just begun; the other, some time after he had finished his explanation. He expresses some

fears lest in it his Platonic philosophy might not harmonise perfectly with Christian Theology, and requests Gonzaga and Flaminio de' Nobili, as divines of some note, to observe if there is any error in his doctrine. He busied himself likewise, at this time, in historical researches, so much so that he says, "My poem sleeps, and I study history incessantly." He received also some new consolatory tokens of regard from Alfonso, and his sisters; and made a short excursion to Modena with Count Ferrante Tassone, one of his greatest friends, and just appointed by the Duke to the government of that city.

On his return, he was kindly reproached by the Duchess of Urbino, for his continual delays in the publication of his "Jerusalem." Many complimentary letters also poured in, declaring the breathless anticipation with which all Italy was expecting it. Criticisms, however, either

came crowding in at the same time, or were kept suspended over his head. "What unhappiness," he cries, "is mine, that every one will play the tyrant over me!"

Still, even these trials must have contributed to show him the renown to which he had attained, and the anxiety with which his great work was looked for. It is difficult for us to understand the extreme desire which possessed the whole country; but when we remember the expressions of Bernardo Tasso, concerning the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto," that within a few weeks after its appearance, there was no one in Italy, high, or low, boy or maiden, young, or old, who had not read it through once or twice; that every country, and city, and village resounded with its verses; and that there was at least as high, if not a higher, degree of interest evinced in the forthcoming 'Jerusalem," we may better comprehend how

earnestly it was longed for, and how Tasso must have yearned for its speedy and perfect publication.

It was not ordained that he should have this happiness.

CHAPTER IX.

ACCUSATION—ARREST—FLIGHT.

THE snares of envy and jealousy were now multiplying fast on every side of Tasso. The net of Ate was closing in around him. Let us pause to consider his character. There were in it many seeds of good; there were striking faults in it which required correction. It is plain from his own writings, and from other accounts, that he had, for awhile, given way to youthful passions; and though never what is called profligate, but, on the contrary,

esteemed the very opposite in that licentious age, that he had been guilty of unhallowed attachments. He confesses this, and laments it with very deep humiliation, and striking expressions of sincere repentance in his later works.

He was, secondly, of a very high spirit; not that he was vain or proud of his talents. He duly appreciated them, but was remarkably open to advice, and to the consideration of other men's opinions. He had the humility of true learning and genius in this particular. But he had a burning thirst, as he assures us, for earthly distinction and renown. He indulged his imagination in the brightest day dreams.

"I marvel," he says, "that I have never written down the promises which I make myself, and the recompences, and the honours, and the favours, and the gifts, and the graces

from emperors and kings and mightiest princes, which I am always imagining and forming at my will."

From the same cause he could not brook affront. He acknowledges of himself, that he "could not live in a city where all the nobility did not either yield him the first place, or at least content themselves with a perfect equality in all exterior marks of honour;" and, again, that "he could not endure being denied the first place in society, being of noble birth, and, besides, Tasso." "This is my humour or principle."

His family was undoubtedly good, and he was the Tasso. Nevertheless, this proud sensibility was a great moral fault, a humour or principle ill-adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, and little likely to ensure his peace in the touchy and jealous atmosphere of the lively but narrow courts in which his lot was cast. We may easily

imagine that countless insults and offences against his dignity, were waiting the first signal of disfavour from his lord, to pour upon him without sparing.

He had, on the other hand, unwearied industry; was remarkable for truthfulness and sincerity both in mind and word; was charitable, courteous, obliging, and tenderly kind-hearted. He had likewise deep devotional feelings, and a strong sense of religion, but hitherto too much confined to the regions of imagination. He was, consequently, tormented at times with painful doubts on the most important Christian truths, though never so far as to abjure any one of them. His faith, also, though awakening spiritual desires, and troubling him with frequent pangs of remorse, had not yet found its way into his heart, much less become the ruling principle of his life.

Sharp strokes of humiliation and affliction seemed needful to chasten the untamed desires,

to scatter the dreams, and abase the exaltation of that proud spirit, to save him from ruinous errors of belief, and teach him the emptiness of every other support, save that of a living faith. And the chastening hand was, indeed, laid heavily upon him, humiliating, afflicting, desolating. And marvellously did it draw out of his faults, the very tribulations whereby they might be best corrected.

Let us trace out the calamity which overwhelmed him, as far as its strange nature, and the accounts which remain of it will admit, for there must ever of necessity be some uncertainty in histories of that kind which we shall attempt to unravel.

We saw that some time before this, when starting on his expedition to Paris, he expressed, in his will, a desire that certain verses of his, written as he states, for a friend, should be destroyed. Unless the friend's name was used for a disguise, it is not conceivable why

these compositions should be dangerous. We have observed also, that his enemies, for a considerable period, had been endeavouring to intercept his correspondence. What is more, they had been either lurking themselves about his apartments, or corrupting his servants, in order to pry into his papers, even those which he kept most carefully in his own chamber. So much did he feel this, that he wrote very earnestly and pathetically to Guidobaldo Marquis del Monte, to send him a faithful attendant out of the country, one whom he might fully trust, to deliver him from this continual treachery.

These plots and machinations against him seem to have begun when the success of his "Amintas" provoked the jealousy of the courtiers. After Pigna's death, they were more unscrupulously pursued. The poet's chief enemies were Pigna's successor in the office of chief secretary, that Antonio Montecatino whom he com-

plains of as inheriting more than his predecessor's animosity, and who figures so conspicuously in Goëthe's play of "Tasso"—a certain Ascanio Giraldini, a Francesco Patrizio, and a Claudio Bertazzolo, and above all a certain Maddalo, about whom nothing further is known, unless, indeed, Maddalo is a nickname for Antonio Montecatino or Ascanio Giraldini. Elsewhere he nicknames his false adversary "Il Brunello," this being, as all readers of Ariosto know, the designation of that little cunning traitor who cheats and mocks so many paladins and heroines, until at last caught and put to death by Bradamant.

It was a dangerous circumstance for Tasso that one of his enemies, and especially so bitter and unscrupulous an enemy, should be the Duke's favourite secretary. The peril was much increased, if Alfonso had any motives for anger in his own person: Tasso felt or

suspected that he had. What else made him form so many plans of quitting his service, of settling at Rome, of taking refuge with the Medici at Florence? and what but the opinion that these apprehensions were well-grounded, made his great friend Scipio Gonzaga so urgent in advising him to quit Ferrara, and so anxious to secure him an efficient patron and protector? Tasso then was conscious that the Duke was ill-disposed toward him, at least desirous of making discoveries concerning him, which he could not anticipate without serious alarm. These discoveries also seem connected in some way with his papers.

Soon after Tasso heard, not only that his letters had been intercepted, and that his adversaries had been again spying round his rooms, and dealing with his servants, but that, during a visit which he paid to Modena in the Lent of this year (A.D., 1576), one of them had entered his apartments with a locksmith,

and forced open all the closets and cases in which he kept his writings and correspondence, using false keys for those which were most private and secure.

On his return to Ferrara, he examined the locksmith who had been employed in this treacherous work, and found the information confirmed in every particular, the locksmith not having been told into whose apartments he was introduced, but only assured that the keys of the desks had been lost. Who this traitor was, is uncertain. It was the false friend whom Tasso called Brunello in his letters to Gonzaga, most likely Montecatino or Giraldini, one certainly whom Tasso had trusted and honoured until his suspicions were aroused.

This discovery increased Tasso's fears, and threw him almost into an agony of apprehension. He dreads accusations of heresy before the Inquisition; he dreads assassination

or poison; he thinks of flight continually, and still he cannot resolve to leave Ferrara. To forestal the terrible denunciation of heresy, he appeals himself to the tribunal of the Inquisition. His justifications were accepted, and the Duke caused some favourable expressions to be conveyed to him, as if to cure him of his terror. He had also a new sort of trial, in a report that his poem had been secretly copied by one of his deceitful friends, and was about to be published without his approval or consent. This, however, was prevented by an order from the Pope, procured through the intercession of his friends, and partly of his patron.

About this time, too, the Princess Leonora, in order to soothe his mind and divert his melancholy, invited him to an ancient palace of the d'Este, named Cosandoli, situated on the river Po, beautiful and delightful. Here he remained about eleven days, and returned

somewhat improved in spirit by the pleasantness of the place, and the charms of Leonora's society, but still unquiet and fearful. Indeed, this visit, at this time, looks somewhat like a snare set in his way on purpose; for his enemies renewed their intrigues. Alfonso's few kind words could not long allay his terror; on the contrary, his alarm augmented. The Duke did not notice him. His fear of being made secretly away with, or at least of undergoing some grievous and unusual punishment, grew stronger and stronger.

One day he meets his treacherous friend in the court of the Ducal Palace. He expostulates with him gently and pathetically. The traitor replies to him with harshness, by degrees with revilings, and the grossest insolence. At last, he gives Tasso the direct lie. Tasso, provoked, strikes him in the face. The man flies; but afterwards, either procuring his opportunity by a challenge, or taking him at

unawares, he, with three of his brothers, makes an attack on Tasso. The poet, it seems, is slightly wounded in the back, but drawing his sword, defends himself with such skill and vigour, that his baffled enemies, seeing people assembling, disperse with all haste.

This duel gave rise to the saying in Ferrara:

> Con penna, e con spada
> Nessun val quanto Torquato.

The victor, much alarmed at the event, immediately appealed to the Duke, with the greatest anxiety, for justice. Manso affirms that Alfonso had him arrested; this Serassi denies, affirming, as usual, that the prince was full of attention and kindness. Tasso's letter, however, which he quotes, indicates at least just grounds for much apprehension. "I have been," he says, "several days in my room,

except that. I have paid one visit to the Duchess, and one to Madama Leonora. Nothing was said of my affairs, and I thought my suit was slumbering. But yesterday evening I was invited, in the name of his Highness, to go with him privately to Lopari, where he goes to-day, with a very few attendants."

Then he mentions that Crispo, Privy Councillor of Alfonso, and chief Justice of Ferrara, had summoned him into his presence, and repeated certain kind expressions from the Duke, and bade him not be surprised because his business had hitherto proceeded slowly, as this tardiness was owing to their wish to get the criminals into their hands; but that now, since it was known that they had left the States, they should be proceeded against with extraordinary severity. Then Tasso hints that a new enemy is succeeding to the old, and that his troubles still remain, and abound. His

friend, the Count Ferrante Tassoni, hearing of his continued agitation, invited him to Modena about the Christmas of this year.

In that city, he met the famous beauty, wit, and poetess, Tarquinia Molsa. The kindness, and the encouragements, and the agreeable conversation of these friends, somewhat relieved his disquietude. They exhorted him, he tells us, to patience and resignation, as the best means of disarming or counteracting his antagonists, as he was resolved to continue at Ferrara.

But this short interval of alleviation was soon brought to an end by new machinations, devised by the perverse ingenuity of his persecutors. He receives a letter from his friend, his greatest, and hitherto unfailing friend, Scipio Gonzaga, full of bitter reproaches, and scornful taunts, directed against both his poem and his character. He perceives it to be a forgery, contrived apparently to separate and estrange

him from a powerful and faithful protector. Nevertheless, he writes earnestly to Gonzaga, imploring him that he would confirm the falsehood of the missive with his own personal assurances.

These unceasing, harassing attacks were but ightly counterbalanced by some very complimentary letters and verses sent him by Orazio Ariosto, the great poet's nephew, preferring him even above his uncle. Tasso, notwithstanding his troubles, was careful to reply to these flattering, but untimely addresses with his usual urbanity and courtesy, deprecating with great elegance, and good feeling, the institution of any such comparison. His letter is eloquent and touching; and proves, as even Serassi observes, strange calmness, and self-possession in the midst of his anxieties, and the disturbance of his mind. He then returned to Ferrara, and during a short interval of repose, devoted himself, in order perhaps to divert all suspicion,

to paying fresh compliments to the Countess of Scala, on the birth of a daughter; and to her step-daughter, Leonora di San Vitale, two great objects of his muse.

His calm, however, was not of long duration. He felt that malicious eyes were watching him; that dangerous trains were everywhere spread for him. His dread of the Inquisition revived with great force. He had entertained this some time before, and had been careful to purge himself once about three years since, and a second time lately. His fears, indeed, were not unreasonable, certainly, by no means so groundless as Serassi would lead us to imagine.

That horrible tribunal was an usual instrument among the sovereigns of Italy for punishing those whom they did not wish to chastise openly. It was constantly employed for political purposes. Even literary characters made use of it in their jealous contests with one another.

Thus, not long before this time, merely from some author's pique, Caro, the translator of "Virgil," denounced Castelvetro, a rival author, who suffered many persecutions in consequence. Besides his justifications before the ecclesiastical authorities, he had also, for his own sake, seriously endeavoured to improve his life. In a discourse on the various accidents of his life, addressed to Scipio Gonzaga, he declares that before this time he had forsaken and deeply repented of the passions and impurities of his youth, that their evil fire was wholly quenched within him. He had also been frequent and regular in confessing, in attending religious ordinances; in receiving the holy Sacrament; in dispensing alms and charities out of his narrow means; his devotional feelings were gaining strength; affliction was nourishing them, and bringing them out into action and reality. His difficulties and doubts, likewise, concerning the holy doctrines of the faith, had

gradually rolled away; they had been such as are natural in an active and imaginative mind, unchastened by self-restraint, and wandering amid the paths of youthful frailty and vanity. He had wished to explain, and to account for all things; and he had doubted concerning the immortality of the soul; the eternity of punishments; God's particular Providence, and especially about the great mystery of the Incarnation. He had never given way to these doubts; he had always detested heresy. He had always clung to the truth, but not without great striving and great disquietude of mind. Afterwards, as his knowledge was enlarged, and his life improved, these mists had been dissipated; he had fully received the whole faith; still he had done so, he tells us, not so much out of love and thankfulness toward God, as out of a slavish fear of the pains of hell.

"And often I heard horribly resounding in

my imagination the angel trumpets of the great day of rewards and punishments. And I saw Thee sitting upon the clouds, and heard Thee speak the alarming words, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' And this terror pressed so heavily upon me, that I was frequently forced to impart it to a friend or acquaintance; and if in confession, I omitted any fault from negligence or shame, however trifling or unimportant, I used to reiterate the confession again and again, often repeating the general Confession also."

He then describes himself as passing into a state of more ease, but with a sense of lukewarmness and coldness, still not of that dangerous kind which is accompanied with hardness and self-satisfaction, and from this kindling more and more with thankfulness and affection. "And now, in great part, I smiled at my past doubts, not because I knew how to solve them, or could explain what Thou art, or because I

fully understood Thy nature, and Thy essence, but because I comprehended that Thou art incomprehensible; and that it was folly to think of containing Thee, who art infinite, in the narrow limits of our human understanding, and of measuring by the measures of human reason, Thy goodness, Thy justice, Thy immeasurable omnipotence."

No endeavour, however, nor any carefulness or watchfulness of Tasso's could stop the unceasing designs, or silence the unscrupulous accusations of his enemies. Neither could they remove his suspicions of Alfonso's displeasure, or allay his increasing apprehension and disturbance. In fact, these three fears, of the Inquisition, of secret assassination, of his patron's enmity, were sufficient to keep any mind in continued agitation, much more such a melancholy and ardent mind as Tasso's. Was he conscious of having given any particular offence?

Was there any reason why the Duke should be displeased with him?

The universal opinion of his contemporaries was, (as is well known,) that he had raised his eyes to the Princess Leonora. Manso tells the noted story of the three Leonoras, to one of whom, while he celebrated all, Tasso was supposed to be really attached. Leonora di San Vitale was the second. The third does not clearly appear in any memoir of the time. She is stated to have been an attendant of the Princess. Serassi will have it that this attendant's name was Olimpia, and therefore he at once declares the story a fiction, but without any real reason for so doing; indeed, Rosini has asserted, that Serassi had documents which confirmed the common opinion, but suppressed parts of them out of his set purpose to flatter the d'Este family, which is most apparent in his whole work, and which involves him in

several inconsistencies. Tasso indicates in his poetry that he admired Leonora from the first, that he was much with her, on terms of familiar intimacy, that he served her long and faithfully, but for a considerable time in vain.

After the "Aminta" was acted, and enhanced his reputation to so high a pitch, he was thrown more into the society of the royal family "ov' or fui nobil servo, ed or compagno," as he affirms in his canzone. When Lucrezia also left Ferrara for Urbino, Leonora seems to have found much comfort in Tasso's conversation, and his affection would naturally increase. There is a great difference in even the published tributes of his muse to her, and to the other objects of his poetical adoration. There is an apparent reality of affection and passion, which contrasts with the high-flown and elaborate praise addressed, for example, to Leonora di San Vitale or Lucrezia Bendidio.

Tasso's renown continually augmenting, and

his familiarity with his patrons advancing with equal steps, his attachment likewise was thought to gain more intensity. During his stay at Rome, in the autumn of A:D. 1575, he heard a report that others were supplanting him in the good graces of the Princess. He wrote to her what Serassi calls a cold, but which every one else would pronounce, a vehemently jealous letter. This jealousy was appeased on his return, and he confessed, in prose and rhyme, the injustice of his suspicions, and the vanity of his disdain.

Guarini is usually supposed to have been this would-be rival. They had subsequently a contest of wit, in which Tasso accuses Guarini of hypocrisy and instability in his attachments, of vain-glory, and empty boasts of successes never attained; and invokes Cupid "never to consent that the lofty beauty which denies reward to its faithful followers, should become the prey of the faithless and the guilty."

Guarini retorts upon Tasso the accusation of falsehood. "He vaunts himself," he says, "of two flames, and often binds and often breaks the band, and with these acts bows, (who would believe it?) the gods to favour him."

This poetical skirmish shows, at least, that Tasso's eyes were thought to be fixed on an object of high rank, even indeed of the highest, and it occurred not very long before his disaster. Not that there is any reason to implicate Guarini in the plots against Tasso; on the contrary, their rivalry, whether in poetry or love, seems never to have overpassed the bounds of secret mutual good-will. There are several proofs of reciprocal esteem and regard between the two, especially on Tasso's side, who, it may be remembered, named Guarini as one of the arbiters of his poetry, and its publication, in the papers intended for his will. Guarini, on the other hand, was one of those who assisted and would, if necessary, have led the way in

the review and actual publication of many of Tasso's works during his imprisonment. Rumours of this attachment of Tasso's, we may well imagine, were carefully conveyed to the Duke's ears by his jealous enemies, for what is so proverbially watchful as the envy of courts? There was even a report that, in a fit of mingled abstraction and passion, the poet kissed the Princess in Alfonso's presence.

This story is unfounded, and evidently a fiction; nevertheless, it shows the common opinion of the day, and became subsequently the chief point of interest in a comedy or drama represented at Venice.

But that which Tasso really feared was, as we have seen, the discovery of some of his papers. This was the constant aim of his enemies, the poet's constant subject of alarm. Was there in them any clear indication of such a passion as would offend Alfonso?

By a careful investigation into his amatory

poetry, by a comparison of different editions and manuscripts, by an observation of the alterations made in certain expressions of his verse, and in the addresses of several of his compositions by his friends, when they published them for him during his imprisonment, also by some lines of a madrigal lately discovered at Rome, Rosini has made it plain that Tasso claimed, in verses never intended to see the light, much less to be published, right to boast of a successful passion with one of royal rank. They are verses which it is grievous to find should ever have been written by Tasso, and give certainly just cause of offence. Still no one was actually named in them, or in the addresses of the sonnets and canzoni altered by his friends. They were discovered in that shockingly treacherous way described above, which could not well be spoken of. There was no evidence in them which could demonstrate, even to an absolute moral certainty, that

Leonora was the subject of these verses, or that they described what had actually occurred. Much less could they be produced as legal, or even public, evidence against Tasso. Still they certainly furnish a highly probable proof, that he had aimed at, or, at the least, imagined a successful affection for the Princess.

More cannot be said. Tasso carefully involves the true cause of offence in studied obscurity, in that "discourse on the various accidents of his life" already quoted. He hints at something wanton in his earlier writings, and some excellent person almost compromised by him. Once or twice he appears on the point of speaking more fully, and then breaks off suddenly without manifest reason; and to the end of his life he was watchful and resolute in refusing to throw any light upon the subject. He was strictly truthful on the one hand, and highly honourable and chivalrous on the other. He, therefore, sealed his lips fast, and when

questioned on the true cause of his imprisonment, his usual answer was, "that Aristo judged no wind so troublesome, as that which carried away the cloak," the cloak that is of prudence and silence in which such matters should be wrapped for ever.

That he had a real attachment for Leonora, whether out of passion, or out of gratitude for her condescension and kindness, cannot well be doubted. This it was, which, after his suspicions were aroused, kept him from quitting the Duke's service; continually drew him back into the snares from which he was breaking away; prevented him from accepting the offers of other princes; and from following the urgent exhortations of Scipio Gonzaga; recalled him from one city after another to Ferrara, either in jealousy, or in obedience to invitations received. This flame held him circling round it like a moth, conscious of his danger, scorching his wings, losing all means of flight, but unable

because unwilling to escape. Hence came that agony of painful irresolution of which he so complained himself, and which his friends so lamented and blamed.

Amongst his intercepted letters, and the papers carried off, or at least spied into, and perhaps copied by his unscrupulous persecutors, who, it is remarkable, were amongst the Duke's chief favourites, some of these sad proofs of Tasso's love were doubtless conveyed to Alfonso. If Tasso knew, or suspected this, he had cause for fear. The petty sovereigns of Italy were certainly among the most jealous of mankind; and none were more sure and uncrupulous in their revenge. Their records, and still more their secret annals, are full of the deepest and most fearful domestic tragedies. Look at the history of the Medici in Florence, and see what a long ghastly picture the whole presents. That of the d'Este was not far behind in gloom and blood.

Alfonso himself, as many of his family, and most of those Italian princes, was a man of considerable talent and ability, but subtle and crooked in his policy, still more so in his secret government. It was thought, as I have remarked, that he had removed his first wife, Lucrezia di Medici, from the world on some suspicion of adultery, real or imagined. Ercole Contrario, also a Ferrarese nobleman, had been called to the palace to answer for a homicide. He never came forth from it again; having died, as Alfonso gave out, of a sudden stroke of apoplexy. But no one believed him. It saved a public scandal, and his possessions lapsed to the Duke.

Again these same sovereigns were extremely solicitous about their dignity. The d'Este, in particular, thought themselves the noblest blood in Europe. In their contest for precedence with the Medici, they sent their genealogical table to most of the great Christian courts.

They piqued themselves on the high and great connections which they formed. Royal and imperial alliances were their delight. It was certainly dangerous for a poor dependant like Tasso, to have offered Alfonso such a double provocation. He could not well have touched him in a tenderer point.

To be conscious of having done this, to suspect that the Duke was aware of it, without knowing exactly how much he had discovered, was enough to throw him into a most serious alarm. The provocations and persecutions of his enemies, the lengths they were permitted to go, the conduct of Alfonso himself, now kind, now cold, now flattering, now threatening, could not fail to engender such suspicions, and to nourish his terror. This state of uncertainty, however, was not likely to last much longer. If Alfonso was secret and dark in counsel, he was resolute and decisive in action. Still his way was difficult. He would wish to discover

the whole truth, if possible, without the world knowing it. He would wish to save the honour of his family; he would wish to disguise the real accusation. He would wish not to acquire the reputation of cruelty by punishing a faithful attendant on a nameless suspicion. He would shrink from losing the glory of being the patron of Tasso's poem. One so renowned as Tasso, in the zenith of his fame, with all eyes fixed upon him in expectation of that poem, could not well be removed, and disappear without being missed. Inquiries would be made after him, and he had many noble and powerful friends to make them. What was to be done?

There is a room in Venice containing a curious and fearful collection. There are the rack, the horse, the boot, the wheel, the cord, the strangling-chair, arm-screws and thumb-screws, and many other contrivances for stretching or compressing, dislocating or crushing,

the poor human body, and its several members. There are other more ingenious, and almost more terrible, because more treacherous instruments; boxes, and vessels, and bottles, once full of strange and subtle, rapid or slow poisons; scent boxes from which leaped a knife to gash the fair cheek, or split the beautiful nostrils, or otherwise mutilate the lovely face, as it bent over them to inhale the perfume; jewel-cases, from which some long, sharp needle should start, or some pungent mixture, or detonating powder should be suddenly cast to extinguish the bright eye, hastening to inspect her wedding ornaments, or her lover's offering; necklaces which should contract round the white neck; bracelets which should run into the snowy arm; helmets, breastplates, gauntlets, secret pistols which should perform the same offices to the warriors of the age; implements of dreadful ingenuity, which conjure up dark scenes of horrible cruelty

and subtle remorseless vengeance, not to speak of other guilt, too often acted in that time, and country.

Amidst these ingenious, but abominable treasures of tyranny, whether royal, oligarchical, or democratical, I doubt if Alfonso could have selected a more subtle and tremendous instrument of torture and revenge, than that which he chose for the punishment of Tasso. He resolved to accuse him of madness; to wring from him first, if possible, an acknowledgment of his offence, and if that failed, a confession of madness; thus saving his honour in all points, he would have him at his mercy, to deal with him as he pleased. He appears, however, first of all to have done all he could to drive him really out of his senses.

Long harassing insults and vexations, amidst simulated kindness; alarms about his poem, first lest it should be published without his know-

ledge, then lest it should be burned; delays and excuses in granting him justice upon the assassins who attacked him; attempts to set him at enmity with his best friends; interception of correspondence; corruption of all his servants; violent entry into his rooms, false keys forged for his desks; investigation of papers—so ruinous if known—dim threats of the dreadful accusation of heresy, and fears of the Inquisition; rumours of danger to his person or his life, hints that the fatal knowledge had been gained; all these were employed to work upon his mind—if we add a dependant condition; love which could not be uttered; the irresolution produced by the contest between terror and affection, between his attachment and the exhortations of his friends; a high spirit, a frank and confiding, but melancholy disposition, liable to occasional fits of abstraction, though hitherto always esteemed even remarkably courteous and grave; a vivid ima-

gination, a great dislike of solitude, an eager, even inordinate desire of renown; if we thus put together the means employed to work on Tasso's mind, and the character of the mind on which they were exerted, it would not be very wonderful if they had succeeded, certainly they were well adapted to their object. Still nothing has hitherto transpired; Tasso seems restored to favour; the Duke has spoken kindly; he finds that he cannot drive Tasso into any open transgression; he seems inclined to disappoint his enemies, to advance him in his favour. All of a sudden the blow falls!

One evening, in the chambers and presence of the Duchess of Urbino, Tasso is arrested by the Duke's order on a strange charge of having seized and raised a knife against one of his attendants, in a fit of frenzy. Not a word, not a suspicion of madness had been whispered before, but now it is given out that Tasso is a maniac; and, under the pretence of preventing

further mischief, Alfonso commands, with many expressions of compassion, that he shall be shut up for the moment in some rooms looking on the court-yard of the palace.

Maffeo Veniero, in a letter to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, thus describes the report which was given out. "Concerning Tasso, I inform you that yesterday evening he was imprisoned, for having, in the chamber of the Duchess of Urbino, drawn a knife behind a servant. He has, however, been apprehended rather for his disorder, and with a view to cure him, than for the purpose of punishment. He has a fancy distracted with a belief of having been guilty of heresy, and with a fear of being poisoned, which springs, I conceive, from the black, bilious blood gathered upon the heart, and fuming up to the brain, a lamentable accident, both for his worth, and for his goodness."

Thus the peril which Tasso, as he testifies in a letter to Alfonso, had long anticipated, at

length overtook him. He wrote again to him, now in terms of earnest and touching supplication. Not knowing exactly what to dread, or what discoveries had been made, he had no power to justify himself; he could only implore for pity. To convey this letter, as no one seemed willing to take charge of it, he had recourse to Guido Coccapani, the Duke's treasurer. That officer was at last, though with the greatest difficulty, persuaded to transmit it for him, accompanied with a deprecating note of his own, stating how carefully he had represented to Tasso, that he was only detained for his recovery, and how earnestly he had dissuaded him from sending the letter.

"But he has still desired that I would send it; and informs you, that if he is kept prisoner, he will fall into despair, being unable to endure confinement, and he promises to have himself cured, and to do all that your Highness shall command; but he asks for his own apart-

ments. Your Highness will decide on what you shall judge good for him."

The Duke consented that he should be so far set free, as to be re-admitted to his own apartments; but on condition that he should submit to a very strict and rigorous medical treatment, under charge of the royal physicians, and royal servants. He also renewed his kind and compassionate expressions, "almost," says Tasso, "as if he had been a brother, and not a sovereign," the better to conceal the object at which he aimed. At the same time, he directed him to present himself at the tribunal of the inquisition at Ferrara, that he might justify the integrity of his faith once more, and receive the inquisitor's absolution, and acquittal. So, at least, it was given out. It would rather, one would imagine, heighten his alarm. After a few days' of suspense, the Duke desired that he should accompany him to his country palace of Bel-riguardo, with words of kind-

ness on his lips in public, but privately to commence the second scene of the painful drama.

There in the gorgeous apartments, or the pleasant gardens, where he had so often read and sung, and feasted with the great and gay, and with the objects of his admiration and affection, Tasso was submitted to a kind of moral torture. "With rough harshness, and with unwonted arts, and acts, and words" (they are his own expressions), Alfonso endeavoured to "wring from him some reason for anger against him." What threats, what promises, what crafty hints, what enticements and persuasions the Duke employed, the marble walls and sculptured pillars, or the flowing waters, and waving groves were alone conscious. We may imagine him now kind, now furious, now stern, now smiling, now solemnly recounting his favours, and Tasso's ingratitude, now making light of

the business, and smiling to entrap him into some unwary acknowledgment.

Now he might speak as if he knew nothing, now as if he knew all that occurred, now he might invite confession as a friend, now command it as a sovereign. When his "unwonted arts" failed, he might grow more open in his displeasure; he might alarm him with renewed fears of the Inquisition, or the rack, or death; now he might assail him by suggestions of punishment impending over the object of his attachment. When Tasso continued resolute in his silence, he might inform him of, perhaps show him, the condemning papers, the wanton verses, and demand with angry sarcasms, for whom they were intended. Whatsoever the mental torture was, to which Tasso was submitted for more than a week, we must conclude that it could not overcome his determination to make no revelation.

Then the grievous sentence was past on him, that he must be a madman for the remainder of his days. This declaration also he was required to confirm, by his own acknowledgment of its truth, and by his subsequent conduct, and by submitting to the confinement necessary for such unfortunates, and to the medical treatment calculated for their recovery.

When this racking examination was concluded, still with words of simulated friendship and pity, Alfonso gave directions that Tasso should be carried back to Ferrara, and confined in the convent of St. Francesco, with two friars to keep watch on him continually; and "because," (said the Duke's missive) "he is used to utter everything in confession, and to break out into a mountain of frenzies, so that he is far worse than ever, the superior is to choose for his keepers, persons fit to admonish him of his madness." Tasso was shut up according to these orders, and at first exclaimed

that he would become himself a monk, a not unusual way in that age of escaping the merciless persecutions of the powerful. This, however, was not the Duke's aim. His mind seems to have been made up. Tasso was to be a maniac. Accordingly, as such, he was committed to the convent.

The first evening of his imprisonment, he wrote two letters to Rome, one to Curzio Gonzaga and the other to Scipio Gonzaga. "Your lordship," he says to the latter, "will be able to understand from the enclosed supplication the condition in which I am. Either I am not only of melancholy fancy but almost mad, or else I am too fiercely persecuted. This only way I see which can lead to peace, or quiet my anxieties." He goes on to beseech him, that he would present his petition to the Cardinal of Pisa, or some other Cardinal of the Inquisition, that by their means the Duke might be informed of the truth. And from the touching

conclusion of the letter, Tasso seems clinging to this proposal, as a kind of forlorn hope, to anything in short which might extricate him from the dreadful doom appointed for him. This hope, however, was not to be fulfilled. The letters never reached their destination. They were seized in Ferrara and consigned to Alfonso.

He next wrote a letter to the Duke himself, in which not a melancholy passion, as Serassi would have us think, but a noble confidence is apparent. "This very thing," he says, "my lady Duchess knows that I foresaw long ago, and of it I was speaking to her, at the moment in which I was apprehended." Surely these words addressed to Alfonso expose the vanity of the charge brought against him. He mentions that he had been accused to the Duke of Florence of having revealed to Alfonso the offers made him by that sovereign.

Then he continues: "I confess that I deserve

punishment for my faults, and I thank your Highness for forgiving them. I confess that I deserve medical treatment (purga) for my melancholy fancies, and I thank your Highness for assigning it to me. But I am sure that in many things I am not fanciful; whereas your Highness is so (pardon me the word) as much as any prince in the world can be. You believe not that I have had persecutors in your service, and I have had most cruel and mortal ones. You believe that you have delivered me from the Inquisition, and I am only the more entangled with it."

He states his only madness to be that he had publicly manifested his suspicions of Alfonso. "But in all other things, I beseech you, by the bowels of Christ, to credit this truth, that I am not so much mad, as you deceived. Henceforth, if I speak to any one, I will confess all I clearly know, to purge myself of my humours."

In a postscript he asks for leave to write to the Duchess, who shall show Alfonso the letter. The Duke sternly forbids all further correspondence with himself, or any writing to the Duchess, his sister. Tasso's fears naturally increase to the highest possible degree. He cannot (as he had said he could not) endure his imprisonment. He seizes a moment when he is left unguarded, and flies.

CHAPTER X.

STAY AT NAPLES—RETURN—SECOND FLIGHT.

CORNELIA SERSALE, Tasso's sister, a widow now, was sitting in her chamber in Sorrento, with her babies slumbering near her, her two elder boys having gone out to their studies. She was looking over the blue gulf toward the island, floating softly on the horizon in the warm purple haze of summer. The airs through the open window brought in the rich perfume of the orange flowers, the gentle murmur of the waters gurgling in the caverned bases of the rocks, or the faint songs of the

birds dying down in the groves beneath the oppressive heat. She was mourning perhaps over her lost husband, or anxiously musing on the perils of her brother. A man, dressed in shepherd's clothes, asks admission to her presence, and gives her letters as from Torquato, describing his situation and danger, in lamentable terms. She questions the messenger, who confirms the painful tidings, and adds other heightening circumstances to the statement.

Cornelia listens in tears, and at last, overcome by the sorrowful announcement, faints away. On her recovery, Tasso, for it was he, having been thus satisfied of her great affection, began to comfort her, and by degrees made himself known; excusing the artifice which he had used, and the pain which he had given her by his fear of startling and alarming her by his sudden appearance, and by the necessity of concealing his arrival from every one.

When he fled from Ferrara, he found his

way on foot through bye-paths, and in secret, enduring many hardships, and much hunger and toil, first across the Roman territories, and then over the mountains of the Abruzzi into Naples. Before he descended into the inhabited country, and the cities, meeting a solitary shepherd on the brow of one of the hills, he had prevailed upon him to exchange dresses with him, and in this mean habit safely reached Sorrento, and his sister's house. Cornelia, having revealed the secret to none except her two eldest sons, and one or two intimate friends, gave out that a cousin of hers had come from Bergamo to visit her.

As her brother was still under sentence of condemnation for treason in Naples, it would have been unsafe to publish his presence. In the quiet repose of her dwelling, in the delights of his native air, in the charms of the lovely scenery, in the beauties of the glorious prospect, and in instructing his elder nephews, and romping

with the younger children, Tasso found refreshment and ease for nearly the space of a year. Here perhaps he might have lived on, if in privacy and without distinction, yet in peace, and tolerable security, had not the wonted attraction drawn him back, as it were irresistibly toward Ferrara. To his attachment we must add the eager thirst for honour, yet unquenched and undiminished, as he laments, and also the desire of recovering his papers and his poem, which were detained in Ferrara, and which were refused to a petition addressed for them by his sister to Alfonso.

Then letters arrived from Leonora, just about three months after his arrival at Sorrento. What she said, or whether she wrote on his own motion, or on compulsion, who can say? But they evidently re-called him to the d'Este court. He, however, withstood her invitation for some time, and wrote in answer, excusing himself on the score of ill-health; and made

Cornelia write likewise, beseeching the Princess to compassionate the affliction and desolation of one bereaved of her husband, and who had no other brother but Torquato, and praying that she would at least suffer her, after having lost sight of him for so many years, to attend on him during his present infirmity, that he might, if restored to health, be better able to fulfil his duties towards her, and her royal brother.

Tasso wrote, also, some time later to the Duke, and to the Duchess, and to Leonora. He received no answer, however, except from the last, informing him, indeed, that she could not assist him in obtaining his pardon, but either in the same, or in some other letter, again pressing his return. Tasso, at last, could not refuse any more, exclaiming to his sister, that he was returning to a voluntary prison; and notwithstanding her warnings and importunities, he left his placid shelter in Sorrento in the autumn of A.D. 1577. He did not, however, return im-

mediately to Ferrara, but went in the first place to Rome, to seek the powerful intercession of his friends, especially the Cardinal Albano, and Scipio Gonzaga. He applied, however, for directions and support to Giulio Muretto, Alfonso's agent, and the Cavaliere Gualengo, his extraordinary ambassador at the Papal court, as if to signify that he was still in the service of the d'Este. His friends at Rome, as his sister previously, dissuaded him by every argument they could use from putting himself again in the Duke's power; and urged him to rest satisfied with requesting his forgiveness, and the restoration of his papers. They even themselves applied to Alfonso for these objects. His answers were unsatisfactory.

They renewed their dissuasions with Tasso; but he could not be restrained, "thinking it more noble to put his life in the Duke's hands, than to deny Leonora's wishes." It was a hazardous resolution. Alfonso's missive to his

minister, shews us how uninviting a guarantee was offered him. "If he proposes to return, we will condescend to receive him. But it is necessary, first that he should acknowledge himself to be full of melancholy humours; and that those suspicions of his, of enmities and persecutions, to which he affirms that he has been exposed to here, spring from nothing, except from those aforesaid humours. From these, he must also acknowledge, spring all the signs of his disorder, namely, the imagination that we will his death (we, on the contrary, having always seen him gladly, and caressed him), when it is plain, that had we entertained such a fancy, it would have been most easy to execute it. Wherefore, let him first decide, and resolve that he will be satisfied, and consent to keep quiet, and allow himself to be cured by the physicians. Let him understand, that should he think of embroiling matters again, and utter words as he has done in time past, we mean to take no further

trouble about him. But should he be here, and refuse medical treatment, we shall forthwith banish him from our states, with a charge never to return any more. And if he chooses to come, we need add nothing further. Should he not do so, we will give orders that some of his goods should be restored to him, which are with Coccapani, to whom let him write."

Tasso surely must have been drawn by some very strong motive when in the face of such a discouraging reply, and in despite of all the warnings and entreaties of his relations and friends, he resolved to break away from all persuasions, and return at once to Ferrara. There accordingly he arrived in company with Gualengo, the Duke's ambassador at Rome, in the February of 1578.

A few words of formal courtesy were at first vouchsafed to him, but in a day or two his persecutions recommenced. Studied insults were offered him by the courtiers. No apart-

ments were provided for him, nor any means of subsistence assigned to him. His papers were detained by some man of rank, who refused him their possession in terms of contempt. He applied to the Duke, but could obtain no answer. He was forbidden to speak to him. He supplicated in dumb show. He used signs and gestures of entreaty and submission, and was answered only with signs and gestures of scorn. Explanations, even words, were refused to him.

He turned to the Princesses; he could not win a reply. Soon the doors were shut in his face with every mark of insolence, even by the grooms and porters of the palace. He was given plainly to understand, that he must consent to be "a third," as he expressed it, "with Solon and Brutus," that is a feigned, or, at least, reputed lunatic: to "live deprived of honour," banished from Parnassus, from the Lyceum, the Academy, into Epicurus' sty,

amidst vile pleasures, and base sensual enjoyments if he pleased, but forgotten and unregarded, to linger out the remainder of his days in the life of brute animals." Once more he could not endure his fears, nor submit to the misery of his condition. He fled again. "After thirteen years of service, he departed, as a new Bias, on foot and alone, to seek with some other prince a secure asylum," a safe harbour for his wrecked fortunes.

He hurried to Mantua. The Duke would not notice him, kind friend and patron as he had been to his father Bernardo. The young prince, Vincenzio Gonzaga, alone shewed him what tokens of kindness and esteem he could. His tender years, and princely spirit, overcame the fear which pervaded the court and city. Soon he was reduced to the most abject poverty. He was forced to sell even the precious ruby, and golden collar which the Duchess of Urbino had conferred on him in the

days of his favour and prosperity, cheated, of course, in the sale.

He contrived to reach Padua; he found his way to Venice; everywhere he was treated with coldness; men, friends, high and low, all shrank from him as a dangerous associate and inmate, perhaps as from a madman; for he himself had unfortunately confirmed, in some measure, the report which was continually and studiously published and spread by his persecutors and oppressors. One nobleman only in Venice had the courage to intercede for him, and that not directly, nor very wisely, but by making interest with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Alfonso's rival.

"Tasso," he says, "is here agitated in spirit; yet, if one must say that he is not of sound mind, he still shews signs rather of affliction than madness. His fancies are, first, that he would fain be in your Highness' service, then that the Duke of Ferrara should

restore him his book, of which he has no copy."

Tasso kept fearing Alfonso would burn it. Then Veniero tells the Grand Duke how Tasso has begun a canzone in honour of the new-born prince, his son; how he longs to be at his court, but would fain have some assurance before resorting to it. "Certainly," he concludes, "I undertake this office with your Highness out of extreme pity, both because this poor unhappy one, if he had not to fight for his bread, would not perhaps have to battle with his thoughts, and because I would fain see exercised that muse of his, of such incomparable worth."

No answer came. Tasso found no safety, no sustenance amidst the luxuries and the splendours of the Queen of the Sea. He passed to Urbino. "Nowhere was he better known; nowhere else could he find such courtesy in

those who knew him, nowhere else so kind and generous a patron." Here he had a short interval of rest; for, indeed, the Duke of Urbino was full of affection for Tasso, and of a noble disposition, ready to benefit his suppliant to the utmost of his power; and no one with any spark of generosity, could have altogether resisted the entreaties of the long, touching letter which he addressed to the Duke of Urbino, from Castel Durante, before he dared to enter his capital, or the earnest, pathetic supplications of the famous, but unfinished canzone in which he implores his protection and intercession, and recounts the misfortunes which have persecuted him from his birth.

It is addressed to the Metauro, the river which passes through Urbino, and it appeals to the Duke, under the image of the oak, the device of the Rovere family.

Thou of great Apennine,
Little but famous child, whose torrent flows
Dark in its wave, but in its glory bright
See! on these banks of thine
Courteous and kind, for shelter and repose
A wand'ring outcast stranger I alight.
May the tall Oak which thy refreshing might
Bedews and strengthens, 'till it opens wide
O'er mountains, and o'er seas its boughs displayed,
Fold me within its shade,
That sacred genial shade to none denied!
'Mid the cool freshness of its tranquil seat,
O may it shroud me, with its densest screen,
And hide me from that blind unpitying queen,
Whose eyes, though blind, on me for ever beat,
Where'er I crouch in mountain, or in glen,
Or down each midnight den
Glide on unseen, alone, with soundless feet;
And shoots me till amid my boundless woe
As many eyes as darts she seems to show.
Ah, misery! from the day
That first I breath'd the air, and op'd my sight
To yon fair heaven ever to me obscure,
Was I the butt and play
Of Fate, unrighteous tyrant. From her spite

I wounds, which ages can scarce heal, endure:
Thou, glorious Siren! shalt my words assure,
Beside whose sepulchre I my cradle press'd.
Would I had press'd a tomb, or outcast grave
At the first blow she gave!
For me, harsh fortune from my mother's breast
Untimely tore. Ah! yet with plaintive sighs
I back recall those kisses which she steep'd
With streaming tears, those burning prayers, she heap'd,
Which the false winds swept idly through the skies.
Ne'er more was I to meet her face to face,
Caught in those arms' embrace,
In those so sweet indissoluble ties,
But like Julus from the Ilian fire
With faltering steps to track my errant sire,
In exile, and the shame
Of want, I grew; and in wild wanderings
I learn'd untimely the sad taste of tears:
For ere the season came,
The rawness of mishaps, and sorrow's stings,
Supplied in me the rawness of my years.
My father's robb'd sick age, his pangs, and fears,
All will I tell. Is't that I have not found
Myself a mine of anguish, whence to raise
Matter of mournful lays?

What must my dirge for others also sound?
Ev'n now for my desire too few my sighs;
And these twin fountains, with unceasing flow,
In vain would equal my abounding woe.
Father! dear father, gazing from the skies!
I wept thee sick, thee dead. Thou know'st it well:
My tears in torrents fell
Upon thy bed, thy tomb. Now thou hast joys
In other spheres. Honour henceforth to thee,
Not plaints, are due. Be all my grief to me.

At Pesaro, near Urbino, where he stayed a few days, during his brief interval of calm, in the house of the Duke's secretary, he wrote a beautiful elegy on a young matron who had just died at the age of twenty-six, amidst the regrets of the whole province. It begins:

Quench'd is the sun of beauty: the abysses
Who now shall lighten, and disclose?

Here also he received a letter from his sister, full of anxiety and alarm for his safety. His

answer was as cheerful as he could make it. He promised to write frequently, and at length, to her, to inform her of all his actions, "calculated as they are, to confer honour both on her and himself; so that we may be able to undeceive those who believe, or have believed, the contrary. Not only," he adds, "will I write to you, but will take care that all my compositions come to your hands, which will make it clear to the world that I am neither sad, nor mad, nor ignorant."

Alas! poor Tasso! how has his hope been frustrated; and yet one would have thought that his argument could not have failed to bear out his assertion. He promised to send her the oration, that long letter so often quoted, which he had addressed to the Duke of Urbino.

"I have parted," he adds, "from the Duke of Ferrara on most just grounds, and I wish you to know that to return is in my power, for my departure torments him. He has even

sent a gentleman by post after me, to prevail on me to return. Many princes," he concludes, "have there been since my departure, who would gladly have received me into their service."

Alfonso's anxiety to have him once more in his hands is very remarkable. It must have been very great to make him despatch a messenger so hastily, and eagerly. He would not, however, give him a public invitation. Tasso, nevertheless, soon discovered that the rumour of his madness was spread wider, and had taken deeper root in men's minds than he anticipated. And fervently does he beseech his friends, especially Scipio Gonzaga, and the archpriest, Lamberto, at Rome, to banish the false imagination from society.

False is the fame that echoes, and that nurs'd
By froward lips still ever spreads, and grows.
False is the tongue, whence issues forth, and flows
The tale by man's credulity rehearsed.

But, ah! 'tis true, Megera with her worst
And bitt'rest gall hath steep'd it: true it sows
Lies 'mid its word, nor gives itself repose,
That it may weave wiles new, and more accurs'd.
O were the knife to cut it from its root,
Then would'st thou see it writhe along the dust,
Like tail of venom'd asp, cleft from its bust.
But thou, Lamberto, pluck the impious thought
From every breast wherein its coils are wreath'd,
Nor be again the lying rumour breath'd.

Before long, he began to feel unsafe at Urbino. He finds that remonstrances against protecting him have been transmitted even as far as Rome. He writes to the Count Girolamo Albano (the son, before he entered orders, of the Cardinal Albano) beseeching him not to suffer his father to cease interceding for him, and befriending him.

He consented then to undergo some medical treatment, and celebrated in a lively madrigal the kind hands of Lavinia della Rovere, after-

wards Marchioness of Pescara, and second only in renown to the famous Marchioness, her mother-in-law, which bandaged up the wound left by the cautery applied. Still tormented by a painful sense of insecurity as long as he was anywhere near Ferrara, he resolved to seek shelter with the Duke of Savoy, a prince at least as potent as the Duke of Ferrara, and unconnected with him by any ties of interest.

After sending a letter to Turin, requesting protection, alone and in secret, he mounted his horse suddenly, and betook himself once more to his wanderings, travelling by way of Novara and Vercelli towards Savoy. All that is known of his journey we gather from his own writings.

"It was in the season," thus he writes in his dialogue of "The Father of the Family," "when the vine-dresser is wont to press the wine

from the ripe grapes, and when the trees are seen in some places despoiled of their fruits, that I, who, in the dress of an unknown foreigner, was riding between Novara and Vercelli, seeing that the air began to blacken, and was enveloped with clouds in every direction, and as it seemed, pregnant with rain, began to spur on my horse. And behold, at that instant, there struck my ears a barking of dogs, mingled with shouts. Turning round, I saw a roe, chased by two swift greyhounds, which being now wearied out, was overtaken by them, so that it came to die almost at my feet. After a short interval, came up a young man about eighteen or twenty years old, tall in stature, fair of aspect, well proportioned, clean-limbed, and vigorous, who, striking the dogs, and calling them off, took out of their mouths the quarry which they had seized, and gave it to a rustic, who taking it on his shoulders at a sign from the youth, walked on

before him at a rapid pace. Then the youth turned to me, and said: 'Tell me, for courtesy's sake, whither you are travelling?'

"'I was desirous,' I replied, 'of reaching Vercelli this evening, if time will permit.'

"'You might perhaps,' he said, 'reach it within that time, if it were not that the river which passes before the city, and divides the territories of Milan from those of Piedmont, is swollen to such a degree, that you will find difficulty in crossing it. Wherefore I would advise you to have the goodness to stay this evening with me, for I have a poor house on this side of the river, where you can lodge with less discomfort than anywhere else in the neighbourhood.'

"Whilst he was thus speaking, I kept my eyes fixed on his face, and thought I perceived in him much courtesy and graciousness: whence, concluding that he was not of low degree, all on foot as he was, having made over my horse to

the vetturino who accompanied me, I alighted, and said that on the bank of the river, I would take his counsel whether to stop or proceed. I walked after him, and he said: 'I will go before you; not as attributing to myself any superior dignity, but to serve as your guide.'

"'My fortune,' I replied, 'favours me with a nobler guide than I deserve. May it please God that in all other respects it may show itself equally prosperous and favourable.'

"He was silent then, and I also followed him in silence. He, however, kept frequently turning back, and searched me over with his eyes from head to foot, as if desirous of knowing who I was. Wherefore I judged it right to forestal his wishes, and satisfy him in some measure, and I said: 'I never was in this country before; for the other time, when on my way to France I passed through Piedmont, I did not take this road. But now, I think, I have no cause to regret having chosen it, as the country is very

beautiful, and inhabited by a very courteous race.

"He then, imagining that I offered him opportunities of conversation, could not any longer conceal his desire, but said to me: 'Tell me, I pray you, who you are, and of what country and what chance leads you into these parts?'

"'I was born,' I replied, 'in the kingdom of Naples, a famous city of Italy, and of a Neapolitan mother. But I derive my origin by my father from Bergamo, a city of Lombardy. My name and sirname I omit, for they are so obscure, that perhaps if I were to reveal them, you would know neither more nor less of my circumstances. I am flying from the wrath of a prince, and of fortune, and am repairing to the States of Savoy.'

"'You are repairing,' he said, 'to the protection of a magnanimous, and just, and gracious sovereign.'

"But as a modest youth, perceiving that I

wished to keep some part of my circumstances concealed, he asked me no more questions. Scarcely had we advanced above five hundred paces, when we reached the bank of the river, which ran so rapidly, that no arrow ever flies with greater velocity from the Parthian bow. It was so swollen, that it already overflowed its banks. I was told also by some country-people, that the ferryman had refused to carry over several French cavaliers, although they had offered him far more than the usual fare. I therefore turned to the youth, who had been my guide, and said:

"'Necessity compels me to accept that invitation which, by choice, I would not willingly have refused.'

"'Although,' he replied, 'I would rather have received this favour from your will, than from fortune. I am rejoiced, nevertheless, because she has provided that there should be now no question of your stay.'

"I was continually confirmed more and more in my opinion, that he was not of ignoble race, or of narrow ability. Wherefore, well satisfied to have chanced on such a host, 'If you please,' I replied, 'the sooner I receive from you the favour of your hospitality, the more thankful I shall be.'

"As I spoke, he pointed out his house to me, which was not far from the bank of the river. It was recently built, and of such a height, that at a glance on the exterior, I saw that it contained several stories of apartments, one above the other. It had before it a small open space surrounded with trees. Thence you mounted by a double flight of stairs, outside the door, each flight composed of five-and-twenty steps, broad and easy, on either side. Ascending the steps, we found ourselves in a large square hall, with two apartments on the right, and two on the left; and I understood that there was the same number of rooms in the upper stories.

"Opposite the door by which we entered there was another door, from which you descended by the same number of steps into a court, round which were several servants' offices and granaries. Thence you passed into a very large garden, full of fruit trees, arranged in beautiful and masterly order. The hall was furnished with tapestry and every other ornament fit for a gentleman's house, and in the middle there was a table spread, and the waiter covered with white china plates full of all sorts of fruits.

"'It is a fair and comfortable dwelling,' I said, 'and must belong to a noble master, who amidst the woods, and in the country, leaves no room for desiring the delicacy and politeness of cities. But perhaps you are its master?'

"'Not I,' he replied, 'but my father is, to whom may it please God to grant a long life. He, I confess, is a gentleman of our city, not unacquainted with courts and the world, although he has spent most of his life in the

country: for he has a brother who has long been a courtier in Rome, and, indeed, still lives there, a particular friend of the Cardinal of Vercelli, of whose worth and authority we have here a high opinion.'

" And in what part,' I exclaimed, 'of Italy, or of Europe, is the good Cardinal known, without being esteemed?'

" Whilst I thus conversed, another youth entered, younger than the first, but of not less pleasing appearance, who announced the arrival of his father, returning from overlooking his property. And behold, the father rode up, followed by a groom and another servant on horseback, and alighted immediately and mounted into the hall."

He greets Tasso hospitably, and after supper, from observations on the fine melons, and fruits of the dessert, they are drawn on into a dialogue on the duties of the father of a family, both in managing his estate and his household.

These agricultural discussions occasioned Tasso to show such astronomical knowledge as elicited from his host the exclamation: "I perceive that I am entertaining a greater guest than I imagined; and you are perhaps one, of whom some report has penetrated into this vicinity, who, through human frailty, has fallen into adversity and is equally deserving of pardon on account of the motive of his fault, and of praise and admiration for other reasons."

"'That fame,' I replied, 'which, perhaps, would not arise from my merit, arises from my misfortunes. But whoever I may be, I say this of myself rather to speak the truth, than out of anger or contempt of others.'"

After further conversation they rose from the table, and the gentleman accompanied Tasso into the chamber prepared for him, where in a very easy bed, he sank asleep in quiet, weary with his journey. The next morning he proceeded to Vercelli, and thence, having no funds

to provide himself with a horse, he was forced to find his way on foot, through the mud and water, with which the country is often covered at that period of the year.

Angelo Ingegneri, a learned Venetian, a scholar and a publisher of great note, was returning from mass in the Capuchin convent outside the walls of Turin. As he was re-entering the city gate, he saw a poor way-worn man, covered with mud, his dress torn, delicate seemingly in health, and somewhat wild in appearance, rudely repulsed by the sentinels, and unable to prevail upon them to admit him. He recognised Tasso, whose stature and appearance were striking, and who could not well be mistaken under any disguise. He made him known to the captain of the guard, and introduced him to the palace of the Marquis d'Este, a distant cousin of Alfonso's, son-in-law of Emmanuel Philibert,

commander of the Piedmontese cavalry, and much in favour with the reigning sovereign. He had known Tasso in the days of his prosperity at the court of Ferrara, and received him with the greatest kindness and hospitality. The Archbishop of Turin, Girolamo della Rovere, an old friend of his father, Bernardo, would also have gladly taken him into his house. Prince Charles Emmanuel shewed him many marks of attention, and made him handsome offers, if he would enter into his service. All the nobility seemed to vie in honouring and cherishing him.

But he could not rest. His heart was in Ferrara—his eyes always turned towards Ferrara. There was a loadstone there, whatever it was, from whose attraction he could not break away. Twice already had he fled, and twice returned; twice found his hopes frustrated, and his stay in that city intolerable; twice escaped the

dangers which environed, and the misery ordained for him; but he still thinks and speaks only of returning—only of undeceiving and conciliating Alfonso. With this view he again appeals to the Cardinal Albano, who gives him all possible discouragement, in a letter of seeming, or real, rebuke and expostulation. His kind host also is most urgent with him to give up his dangerous intention, and remain peaceably and happily in Turin. He endeavours to distract his own mind from its engrossing desire by celebrating his hostess, the Marchioness, and the charms of a friend of hers, and by composing a new dialogue—that "on Nobility"—in which he introduces his host as the chief character. He promises to send it to Cardinal Albano as a proof of the soundness of his intellect.

In Turin not a whisper is breathed of any suspicion of madness. His friends made interest with

Alfonso, to procure the restoration of his books and goods, and some pecuniary assistance, in hopes of detaining him amongst them. They receive from the Duke a somewhat favourable answer; but, at the same time, the perilous information, that he is ready to receive Tasso again into his service, on the old conditions of submitting to medical treatment, and his guidance and direction for the future. That there were other offers made to Tasso, and other assurances given him, either now or at some previous period, the better to win him back, cannot be doubted.

He was in correspondence with Count Scipio del Sacrato, Alfonso's favourite, to whom he expresses his readiness to give all the desired satisfaction. He asks, in his subsequent complaints in the hospital of Santa Anna, "Is this the faith pledged to me?—this my glorious, and so desired return?" He speaks of Alfonso

as of him "who guided him, who imprisoned him, who promised to him, who deluded him." He demands if the "noble faith shall be despised and set at nought?" Still the persuasions of his friends kept him some little time longer in Turin. At last his determination was fixed by the nuptials resolved upon between Alfonso and Margherita Gonzaga, daughter of the Duke of Mantua.

This was the Duke's third marriage; and Tasso thought such a time of rejoicing a favourable opportunity for making his return. He judged, perhaps, or persuaded himself, that it would recall his long and faithful service to the d'Este, ever since his first arrival in Ferrara, before the wedding of the Duke with Margaret of Austria. He probably imagined also that he should find a new and powerful intercessor in the bride. Wherefore, once more bursting from the entreaties, and disregarding the re-

peated warnings of his good friends, he obeyed the irresistible attraction, and reached Ferrara on the 2nd of February, A.D. 1579, one day before the new bride was received in state at Belvedere.

CHAPTER XI.

IMPRISONMENT—OPPRESSION.

On his arrival at Ferrara, no one noticed Tasso. The Duke and the Princesses closed their doors against him as before. The ministers and gentry encountered him with neglect or savage inhumanity. He complained to the Cardinal Albano and Maurizio Cataneo, his secretary, beseeching them once more to obtain for him his books and writings, and permission to bring them with him to Rome. They could give him no assistance.

The bride enters Ferrara. The revel, the

feast, the tourney, the harmonious concert, the magnificent spectacle, the gorgeous pageant, fill the city, as at Tasso's first coming, with melody and splendour. But Tasso, deceived, insulted, trampled on, scoffed at as mad, wandered to and fro alone, houseless, disconsolate, and trembling, amid the glittering tumult, groaning and repenting that he had ever left Turin, where he was so kindly and honourably treated. The studied impertinences and insults of the courtiers and servants were renewed with greater licence than ever. All shunned, or mocked, or reviled him. None comforted, none sheltered him.

Not one of the promises made to him were fulfilled. Every thing was done, which subtlety or malignity could devise, to irritate him. For a month he bore the brunt of this miserable persecution, and wrestled hard against this cold torrent of contumely. Worn out at last with the continual struggle, stung to the quick in

his tenderest point, his reputation, and provoked by some more cruel insult than usual, his patience exhausted, and his indignation aroused, he broke out into vehement reproaches against the Duke and his court, lamenting his long thankless service, retracting the praises which he had poured upon them, and complaining of the treachery and false promises which had beguiled him. His words were carefully conveyed to the Duke.

The long sought opportunity was come. Without delay Tasso is apprehended by Alfonso's order, though with many expressions of concern and pity, calculated to enforce the impression of his madness which the Duke had so long laboured to establish. He is declared a confirmed maniac, and as such, committed to the hospital of Santa Anna, an establishment for patients, and especially for lunatics, of the lowest class of society.

In a wretched cell of this building, solitary,

helpless, destitute, with the threatening voices of the keepers, the hissing of the lash, the clanking of chains, with the shrieks of the frantic, the gibbering laughter of idiots, the yells and howls of maniacs, ringing continually in his ears, and reminding him without ceasing that he had become one of them, Tasso lay for many days overwhelmed and stupified. He aroused himself, he looked around, he began to discern and comprehend his misery. But he awakened at the same time to exert himself.

"O, miserable that I am," he breaks out, in a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, "I had designed to write two epic poems of most noble and glorious argument, four tragedies, of which I had already formed the plan, and many works in prose, on subjects of highest beauty, and greatest advantage to human life; and so to unite eloquence with philosophy, as to leave of myself an eternal memory in the world, and I had set before myself a most exalted measure of

glory and honour. But now, oppressed beneath the weight of such intolerable calamities, I abandon every thought of glory and honour, and most happy should I count myself if, without suspicion, I could only allay the thirst by which I am continually tormented; and if, as one of the ordinary race of men, I could in some poor cot spend my life in liberty, if not sane, which I cannot more be, yet at least no more in such agonising weakness: if not honoured, yet at least not abhorred; if not with the rights of men, yet at least with those of brutes, who in the rivers and the fountains can freely quench their thirst, with which, (and it eases me to re-echo it,) I am all on fire. Nor do I now so much fear the greatness of my anguish as its continuance, which ever presents itself horribly before my mind, especially as I feel that in such a state I am unfit to write or labour. And the dread of endless imprisonment fearfully increases my misery, and

the indignity, to which I must submit increases it, and the foulness of my beard, and my hair, and my dress, and the filth, and the damp, annoy me, and above all, the solitude afflicts me, my cruel and natural enemy, by which, even in my prosperity, I was often so troubled, that in unseasonable hours I would go and seek or find society." He bursts forth also into wild pathetic poetry, such as has not often been addressed, and in vain, to the ear of man. To Alfonso, to his sisters, he lifts his supplication; he deprecates his wrath, he deprecates their neglect.

TO ALFONSO.

O thou the mighty son
Of glorious Hercules!
Whose honours far thy sire's renown outrun,
To thee, in noble ease,
From exile's weary ways,
Who first receiv'dst me to thy royal halls,
From these deep dungeon walls,

To thee I turn, I raise
My heart, my mind, my gaze;
To thee my knees I bow;
To thee my cheeks with scalding tears I plough;
To thee my lips unchain;
With thee, to thee, but not of thee complain.

Ah! turn thy gracious view,
And see, how here, where languish
By pity hous'd, a poor and brain-struck crew,
Thy servant in his anguish
'Neath all that sad band lies;
His visage pallid with death's ghastly stains,
Wrapp'd in a thousand pains,
With hollow glaring eyes,
With limbs unclean, and wild,
Wasted, and dust defil'd.
Drain'd of life's streams, and gnarl'd with agonies,
Envying each mad compeer,
Whom pity comes to comfort with a tear.

Pity alone for me
Is dead, and mercy lost,
If yet they harbour not, nor spring in thee.
Ah! what a countless host

Of new strange woes leaps forth,
And racks me! What my tortures may assuage?
Banded in emulous rage
In heav'n the stars, on earth
Those gold and purple dight
Against me fiercely fight,
All waste my hill of song with furious mirth.
Yet grace of all I crave;
And most of thee, whom most I injur'd have.

Yet what? Jove burns with ire.
The steaming vows ascend.
At once his lightnings, and his wrath expire.
And shall not I contend,
That thou aside mayst aim
The dreadful shafts, which thou 'gainst me art raising,
With flame and anger blazing,
At some more guilty name.
While heav'n to grace I woo
With vows and offerings true,
Jove, Mars, and Phœbus honouring in thy fame
Since their, and every grace,
In thy great heart, find royal dwelling place.

TO LUCREZIA AND LEONORA.

Oh ye, Renata's daughters!
I speak not at the pyre
Of those fierce twins,* whom not e'en death united;
When, cradled mid red slaughters
Ambition, scorn, and ire
Their shades, their ashes, and their flames divided.
To you, in whom heav'n guided
And royal seed appear'd,
On one soft genial breast,
As in a champaign blest,
Born, and together in fair childhood rear'd,
Like two sweet plants that rise
Serv'd by the earth, and foster'd by the skies,

To you I speak, where meeting
In heavenliest harmony,
Grace, wisdom, honour, beauty, wit find dwelling,
To you my woe repeating,
Blended with many a sigh,
I the dark history of my grief fulfilling,
In you the memory thrilling
Of you, of me, revive

* Eteocles and Polynices.

The years with you I past,
Your friendship dear and fast,
And what I was, what am, what ask, where live,
Who led me here, and lock'd me,
Ah, woe is me! who promis'd, and who mock'd me.

These things with bitter groanings
To you I tell, oh seed
Of heroes, and of kings sublime and glorious?
And if in my deep moanings
Words fail my boundless need,
In ceaseless tears my grief shall pour victorious.
Harp, trump, and wreath, and chorus,
Weeping I moan, I moan.
Study, and ease, and sport,
Banquet, and hall, and court,
Where I was noble thrall, then dear companion.
Health, freedom from me torn,
And rights of humankind, ah, misery! laugh'd to scorn.

Oh! from the sons of Adam,
Who cuts me thus away?
What Circe drives me to her bestial sty?
Ah, me! the wild birds glad them,

Nesting in trunk and spray,
And beasts in dens, with happier laws than I.
They own but Nature's tie,
And crystal, pure, and good,
To them its wave the fountain,
To them field, hill, and mountain
Yield healthful, ready, and untainted food;
To them the winds, the skies
Blow free, shine free, to comfort and rejoice.

Well earn'd my pains—I err'd,
I err'd—I own it. Still
'Twas my tongue's sin. My heart disclaims—disowns it,
Now mercy is my word.
And if to my deep ill
Ye stoop not down, no pitying soul bemoans it.
Ah, me! 'gainst fortune's onset
Who, who, will intercede,
If always deaf are ye?
Ah! should ye not agree
To succour swift in this my utmost need,
Yourselves my anguish end,
And me at once, like Alban Metius, rend!

O may the mingling graces,
Whose beams with music move
Round your bright forms, to one blest concord turning,
Stir all sweet pity's traces
In him, for whose dear love
My fault worse racks me, than my own heart's mourning,
Ah, me! though fiercely burning;
Till to his deeds that flame
Blazon'd in glitt'ring stories,
To all his countless glories,
His endless trophies, and his boundless fame,
He adds this glory more,
Grace to who wrong'd him, but doth now adore.

My song, bright virtue sparkles where I send thee,
Me fortune favours not.
Meet'st thou no faith? Ah! friendless is our lot.

He had reason indeed to lament his situation, to envy the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, to pine after the free winds of heaven, the shadow of forests, the whisper of leaves,

and the coolness of fountains. He had reason to call himself "a breathing corpse within a living tomb;" to complain that, "while the great palaces and glittering roofs were echoing with harmony, he alone made his foul prison resound with weeping." He had reason to declare, that "pity must be dead, or banished from royal breasts, if his voice of mourning were unheard;" to ask after "untimely death;" to demand of his sovereigns, "if their mercy is a prison, their reward a bier?"

He had loved renown, society, the sweet face of nature, the praise of men, the affection of women. He had been delicate in his food, particular in his dress, fastidious in his person. He had a dread, we have seen, as many imaginative persons have, of confinement, of scorn, of solitude. The cell in which he was shut up, was narrow, and dim, and unfurnished. There was no prospect from it. His only objects of

view were the blank, damp walls around him, and "the gate ever shut in his face."

No one at first was admitted to visit him. He was never allowed to move forth, even to the holy rites of religion. Of the physicians for body and soul, so often spoken of before, nothing was now heard. The sad, terrible sounds of a mad-house were continually breaking in upon him. Person, dress, food, were now disordered and foul. The chaplain of the hospital was not permitted to attend him. The prior, a man otherwise of high character, and a friend of Ariosto, we must conclude by the direction of higher authorities, treated him with the greatest inhumanity. The rough attendants of such an asylum behaved to him with insolence and contumely; even more fearful treatment seems to have been dealt out to him, so grievous, that he who published Tasso's account has left blanks in the worst particulars.

In his mind was the memory of past hap-

piness, "than which is no greater pain in misery." His future was an anticipation of perpetual imprisonment, and irretrievable disgrace, and incurable oppression. There was the bitter pang, too, that he had been deluded into confirming the report of his misfortune so sedulously spread by his tormentors.

It was surely an overwhelming affliction, worse even than the sufferings of his contemporary and equal in genius, and second only in tribulation, Camoens. It was enough, as he exclaims, "to make the most sane mad."

One wonders that his biographers speak often so lightly of his calamities. We know well now the effects of solitary confinement on common minds, on persons educated in poverty and hardship, who have nothing in the past to regret, no dreams of honour and glory to surrender, a prospect of release after a certain period of imprisonment, not an indefinite and horrible apprehension of being separated from

the world for ever. A few months, a few weeks are sometimes said to effect the destruction of the mind, to drive reason from its throne, and change the strong sane man into the lunatic, or the maniac.

How long Tasso lay in that miserable state, to which he was first reduced, is uncertain. A nephew of the prior's seems, after several months, to have succoured and comforted the prisoner by occasional visits; and he may, when he wrote his letters and poems entreating for intercession or deliverance, have had some communication with other persons. With these exceptions, he was shut up in that degraded and wretched condition for nearly fourteen months; and for several of them, it seems absolutely alone, forgotten apparently by all, and parted, he feared, from human society for ever.

He had, however, writing materials. And surely by a very great exertion of courage, and with a resolution and energy, wonderful in such

circumstances, he was able to use them, and, at times, very diligently. Even in that cell, that gloom and solitude, surrounded and harassed by the fearful noises of his abode, under that awful impending apprehension, of never coming forth any more, he commands himself to write such poetry as has not often been surpassed or equalled, to frame supplications in prose and verse to persecutors and friends, scholars and prelates, princes and princesses, emperors and imperial counsellors; to compose philosophical dialogues of the most regular and elaborate nature.

The pen and ink, and the power in general to use them, seem, under the hand of mercy, to have been Tasso's support in these first dreary months of his confinement. Let us really place ourselves in his circumstances, and judge if they were not trying; if it would not require extraordinary self-command to have made use of Tasso's consolation.

His first petitions were, as we have seen, addressed to Alfonso and the Princesses; and, in the next place, to Scipio Gonzaga, whose interest with the Prince of Mantua, he particularly applied for, judging that Alfonso's bride, sister of that prince, might make effectual intercession for him. He also had recourse to the Emperor, Rudolph II., a great patron of the arts, and the Cardinal Albert, of Austria, his brother, who subsequently secularised himself, and married, and was established King of the Netherlands. To this prince, he sent a discourse on Heroic Virtue, and Charity, in the opening, and at the conclusion of which, he requests his and the Emperor's assistance.

"Now, I turn myself," he ends it, "to you, a prince heroic and full of charity; and implore you to show some act of heroic virtue, and of charity, toward me. I am that Torquato Tasso, who, a few days ago, wrote to the Emperor, your brother, bringing to his notice myself, and

my misfortunes, so strange and lamentable; and all those favours, which I asked of him, I now turn to ask again of your serene Highness: not because I doubt his clemency and courtesy, but because I desire to be recommended by you to the Cardinal d'Este, as by him to the Duke of Ferrara. He can issue his commands to the Duke Alfonso, and you your recommendations to the Cardinal with much authority. I ask the greatest of princes to recommend me to a great prince, the noblest of heroes to have me recommended to a noble hero. I ask a Cardinal, most full of charity, to awaken in a Cardinal full of charity, some compassion for my miseries, so that I may at last begin to receive some consolation, after so many sufferings, and reap some fruit after so many labours."

Cold was the reception which the Duke gave to every intercession and intercessor for poor Tasso. The only answer which he vouchsafed was, that, instead of listening to the complaints

of a poor lunatic, who knew not what was good for himself, they should exhort him to suffer the physicians to deal with him. Be it remembered that no physician seems ever to have seen him at this time in his prison! And whatever could be said, Alfonso remained firm in his resolution of keeping him confined in the hospital, professing that he would do so till his health was re-established, loving him, as he did, not less than those who applied to him.

What wonder, at the close of the period I have mentioned, that, worn out, and disappointed, and exhausted with bodily and mental suffering, Tasso complains that his mind grows dull in reasoning, his fancy sluggish in imagining, his senses negligent in ministering to them the necessary ideas, the hand unwilling to write, and the pen, as it were, averse to the work.

"I feel," he says, "freezing all over in my travails, and overwhelmed with a strange stupor and oppression; nor without some token of

courtesy and favour, shall I be able to arouse in myself that vivacity, and those spirits, which have been hitherto alike generous in prose and verse." A gleam of such favour seemed to shoot into his prison in a visit which he received from young Vincenzio Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, for whose intercession he had so earnestly applied. It was but a glimpse of light, lost immediately in the old hopeless darkness of his prospects; still it was sufficient to give him some consolation, to thaw the cold frost of his spirit, to renew his courage and activity, to set his pen in its usual rapid motion. Sonnets to the prince, and to others, and two dialogues, "The Ambassador," and "Gonzaga, or Virtuous Pleasure," the former dedicated to Vincenzo, the latter to the Seggi of Naples; and before long, that dialogue of "The Father of the Family," of which an extract has been already given, were begun, and carried on,

and completed, all save a few alterations and touches, which were added in after years. This visit of the Prince of Mantua occurred in April or May, A.D. 1580, thirteen or fourteen months after Tasso's imprisonment.

Perhaps an extract from "The Ambassador" may be interesting, as a specimen of the writer's flowing wordy prose, and of the fancies and arguments with which he peopled and illuminated his sad dark cell, and supported himself under the burden of his solitude.

"It was now the hour in which the approach of the sun begins to illuminate the horizon, when, as I lay on the soft bed, with my senses bound by slumber, not in strong chains, but so lightly, that my condition was between waking and sleeping, the Gentle Spirit, which is wont to discourse with me in my imagination, came to my ear, and called me by that name which is common to all my race.

"As soon as I heard that voice so soft, and so sweet, I answered immediately, 'Methinks I know your voice by its sweetness, for it sounds not like mortal speech, but such, that I should conclude you to be a spirit of Paradise, descended from heaven in pity of my miseries, if you were not more ready to comfort than assist, whereas the angels are wont to bring succour as well as consolation. But if you are not angel or blessed spirit, what can you be?' Demon or spirit unblest, I cannot think you, and I know not if nocturnal apparitions are aught else. Otherwise, perhaps, I might imagine your voice one of those of which our poet speaks, 'Never nocturnal spectre was so full of delusion as this toward us.'

"At these words, the spirit raised his voice in such a manner, that methought I had never heard him speak so loud before. Nevertheless, although he spoke like one offended, the anger was half lost in the sweetness of the voice.

'Ingrate, couldst thou ever imagine me an apparition of error?'

"Then I, half ashamed and grieved, replied, 'Oh! let not my every word offend you; and if you will not concede to my ignorance the right of doubting, grant at least to my misfortunes the right of lamentation, and suffer me to say to you what Eneas, amidst Juno's persecutions, said to his goddess mother, when she appeared to him under assumed forms:

> Unkind, and cruel to deceive your son
> In borrow'd shapes, and his embrace to shun;
> Never to bless my sight, but thus unknown;
> And still to speak in accents not your own!*

"'Although you, indeed, are far more unkind than she was, since she in some way, or by some sort of body, presented herself to his eyes, but you I have never seen; only I hear

* Dryden's Virgil.

your voice, which, nevertheless, proves that you have a body; since a voice cannot exist without a tongue, and without a palate. But if you have a body, why do you not show it? Perhaps you are rather pleasant to hear, than beautiful to behold; or perhaps this is all a dream, and you are nothing more than a creature of the imagination, and all the reasonings which I have held with you in time past are dreams; inasmuch as while the body sleeps, the soul stays not idle; but being unable to employ itself on exterior objects, betakes itself to those images of things sensible, which it has stored up in its memory, and of them composes various figures; so that there is nothing in the world without us, which it cannot imitate within us. And frequently it even unites those things together, which cannot be united in reality by their nature.'"

After some further disquisition, we find the Spirit saying: "The word Dream would rather

befit the greater part of your past life; for when you look back upon it, you can see nothing real, nothing genuine, nothing pure in it; and all the objects which showed themselves to your senses were, so to say, ghosts of the True, and mere images of real essences, which cannot be seen here below by those who have their eyes wrapped in the veil of humanity; but when you shall open them in the life to come, which is the one only life, they shall reveal themselves to you, so that you shall smile at all your past miseries."

This was the old doctrine of the Academy; and after some further Platonic discussion, gathered principally from Virgil, and the various ways in which he describes the manifestations of his deities, and an explanation of the difference between ideas and intelligences, which last, after the old scholastic theory so beautifully stated by Dante in his "Paradiso," were then supposed to animate the celestial spheres, and to

be allegorized in the planetary divinities of the heathen, the Spirit announces that there are two ways in which celestial spirits can shew themselves to men; viz., first, by purging their eyes to behold their light; or, by clothing themselves with a body, which can be the object of human sensation. In this last way he proposes to display himself.

"'I will begin,' he says, 'to satisfy your desire in part, and will make you see me clothed in a body, active and luminous, to which you never saw anything at all resembling; but it is in its nature very like that which your soul had from heaven when it united itself to the body; for you must know that the pure, simple, immortal soul, could scarcely attach itself to those mixed, frail, earthly members, except by means of a body, purer, lighter, and subtler. When, therefore, you see my appearance, you will be able to judge in part what that body is, which, as a soft bark within a rough, is enclosed within

this outer rind of yours.' As he finished, a whirlwind, meseemed, smote the windows, and burst them open, and a thousand orient sunbeams illuminated all the chamber, and the bed where I was lying. In that most beauteous light appeared a youth, on the borders of boyhood and manhood. There was no down upon his delicate cheeks. His body was of the finest possible proportions; his flesh so white, that it surpassed ivory, his hair of so bright a colour, that it outshone gold. He had azure eyes, such as those which Homer attributes to the Goddess of Athens, in which so sweet a smile sparkled, that although I was dazzled by their exceeding radiance, I yet assuaged the pain caused by that overwhelming splendour, with the charm of their gracious regard. He had most beautiful hands: they were bare; but in his right hand he carried two gloves, resting his left on a table of chestnut wood, which by accident was in my apart-

ment. He was clothed after that fashion, which is at present esteemed most becoming by courtiers. But by far the most remarkable part of his dress was a girdle of velvet, garnished with silver, and of most marvellous workmanship; for although the figures in it were small, they could be seen from a long way off, just as if they had been large. There were the forms of Laughter, and of Sport, and of the Graces; so I supposed that it was the girdle with which Venus adorns her waist, and without which she would be far less dear and lovely; and that she had now lent it to my visitor, as of old to Juno; which girdle, it was said, had the power of kindling love, and working other astonishing effects.

"The beautiful youth seemed to me such as Love must have been, at the time when he fell in love with Psyche. And that which most increased my amazement was, to see him not alone, but accompanied by a multitude of little

boys like Lovelings, who all stood apart from him at a considerable distance, as if from reverence. One only greater than the rest, and who seemed next to him in dignity, drew so near him, that they could converse together without being overheard. I, all full of marvel, and astonishment, turned my eyes now on one, now on the other.

"At last, oppressed with a new and strange desire, I eagerly fixed my eyes on him, who seemed lord and king of the rest. And after my marvel had a little subsided, and I had found time to recollect myself, I began to address him thus:

"'If you are Love, and these your little followers, Lovelings, where are your wings? I ask not where your arrows are; for though I do not see them hung with your quiver, behind your shoulders, I nevertheless feel their power: whence I perceive that these are the only things which you have been unwilling to make visible,

it being sufficient that they should be known through another sense than seeing.'

"He replied with a smile, 'Believe what you will about the arrows. But about the wings, even were I Love, you need not marvel that I have doffed them, since it is Carnival time, and I have transformed myself, as all you mortals then do.'

"This he said in such a way, that I imagined him desirous of leaving me in doubt, whether he was Love or not. I therefore began discoursing with him thus:

"'You have said that you willed to take a body like that, which my soul brought with it from Heaven; and a little before you said, that when you show yourselves to mortals, you all take an aërial body. These words of yours neither agree with one another, nor with your appearance; for the semblance and splendour of your body is more celestial than aërial; and if I brought any body from Heaven, it certainly

ought to be heavenly; and yours also ought to be heavenly, if it resemble this inner one of mine.'

The Spirit agrees that his body might be both. "'And I gather,' continues Tasso, 'from your words, that you are a Spirit whether aërial, or celestial, or elementary; and combining what you tell me with what I have read, I judge you to be the genius appointed to take care of me, whose office it is to rule or direct my opinions. And I feel a power raining from your eyes, and mingling with your rays, which passing through my eyes into my heart, generates in me a desire of producing some fair offspring in some fair and courteous mind. And inflamed by the shower of these rays my soul sparkles, and burns, to renew those wings, which it lost unjustly in its headlong descent; and I already feel that itching which children feel when cutting their teeth, or birds when producing their new feathers after moulting. Moreover, to return

from my wings to yours, these are what I desire to see for my consolation. If you are he whom mortals call Love, it is no wonder that you can lay by your wings; but if you are not the common, but the celestial Love, he I mean, whom you all in heaven, in language different from ours on earth, call Winged, then I marvel greatly that you can strip yourself of them; for he, if I have learned the truth concerning him, has his wings always with him, and of necessity flies.'

"'This,' he answered, 'is a truth which I choose to keep hid among my secrets: neither do I please to clear up your doubts on this point. However, if I was the aërial and celestial Love, for watery spirit I certainly am not, I could have wings, and still not show them. But while I do not confess myself to be Celestial Love, I yet assure you that he is in truth winged; and has two wings so large that all the world is shadowed by them: one of which ex-

tends to the East, the other to the West, he having, when seated on his throne, his face toward the North, and his back toward the South.' Thus spake the Spirit in magnificent language."

After a brief discussion on the power of the imagination, with quotations from Petrarch Virgil, Horace, Dante, "It cannot be denied," says the poet, "that the imagination occasions a certain alienation of mind, which whether it be the disorder of madness, as that of Orestes and Pentheus, or divine frenzy, as that of those rapt by Bacchus or by Love, has undoubtedly the same power of representing false images as true, which a dream possesses. Yea, rather it seems to have this power more than dreams; since in sleep, the senses only are bound; whereas in frenzy, the mind also is entangled. Wherefore, if what is commonly reported of my madness were true, I might, perhaps, fear that my visions would be such as were those of

Orestes or Pentheus. But since I am not conscious of any deed like the deeds of Orestes and Pentheus, while I deny not that I am mad, I yet am glad to believe that my madness is caused either by drinking or love; for this I know, without any possibility of mistake, that I drink exceedingly," (he means I think in his visions); "and even too much do I long and wait for the grace of him" (he means Alfonso) "who could certainly bless me by a small portion of those favours, of which I am sure he is less sparing to those who love him far less than I do."

"Perhaps," he says in the earlier uncorrected dialogue, "it is an exceeding melancholy. And the melancholy, as Aristotle affirms, have been distinguished for talent in the studies of philosophy, the government of states, the composition of poems. Such," he adds, "were Ajax and Bellerophon; and certainly," he continues, "it was not so difficult a task to conquer the

chimera as to subdue melancholy, which indeed is more like the hydra than the chimera; for scarcely has the melancholy man cut down one tormenting thought, before two are already springing up in its place, by whose deadly bites he is rent and lacerated. However this may be, those who are melancholy, not through any malady, but by nature, are of singular genius. And I am melancholy from both causes; so that I live consoling myself in part. And though I am not full of exceeding hope, as we read of Archelaus, King of Macedonia, nevertheless I am not so cold and frozen hearted as to be forced into destroying myself."

He proceeds to learned and ingenious disquisitions according to the strange mixture of philosophy and religion then in vogue, on the nature of apparitions and magic, on ideas and intelligences, and the motions of the various heavens, the place which the deities, or the angelic powers, and the demons, in the Platonic or patristic

sense of the word, occupy in the government of the universe, with an imitation of the famous address of the Supreme Deity to the inferior divinities in the "Timeus" of Plato, and a discussion on the noted question of the unions of spirits with human beings. He represents the demons as intermediate between men's souls and the celestial powers, and these between the demons and the Divinity; ambassadors respectively between earth and air, and air and heaven. Afterwards he treats of the duties of earthly ambassadors: he enumerates the most famous of his time, among others Batista Guarini. He pays a fervent compliment to young Gonzaga, evidently to obtain his mediation with Alfonso. The Spirit at last indicates that he must go. Then I, (concludes the poet,) at the tidings of his departure, began to sigh, and I said: "Oh! blessed Spirit, in your happiness, bethink yourself of my miseries, and grudge me not from time to time some

kind succour.' I would have continued, when it seemed to me that, after signalling with his hand, he withdrew himself from my sight, and disappeared, breathing around, as he vanished, the sweetest perfumes of ambrosia, and leaving the room marvellously glittering with heavenly radiance. And I, arousing myself, perceived that I had been philosophising in the depths of my imagination, as contemplative men dwell in the objects of their contemplation."

This dialogue he sent to Vincenzo Gonzaga, with the following dedication. "Your Highness abounds as much in every ornament as I am destitute of every succour. Wherefore, by dedicating this dialogue to you, I bring you no honour; rather I receive a favour from you. It is written after the doctrine of the Platonists, which differs in many points from Christian verity. Men, therefore, should not wonder because I have placed various intermediate beings between man and God; it is not philo-

sophers alone have done so, but even Saint Bernard, who has called the angels mediators, whereas Saint Augustin says that there is but One Mediator; and again, they should not be surprised that I to some extent pass no censure on judicial astrology, which by the same father is reproved and condemned; or again, that in the creation of man I have followed Plato's opinion, blamed by Saint Ambrose. It is because, not arguing in the character of a theologian, I judged it not unbecoming to write platonically, for all other methods seemed to me absolutely contrary to true theology. But since all philosophers ought to seek for truth, though not necessarily in the same way, I seeking it in this way, have endeavoured not to wander far from the truth. Your Highness, therefore, will read it, as the work of a man who writes as a philosopher, but believes as a Christian; and such would I have it regarded by every one else. Still, if no one else reads it, you will compen-

sate for many. Nor do I desire its publication among men, except that whosoever reads it, may see in it a testimony of the affection which I bear you, and of the desire which I have to serve you. Wherefore, should it not please your Highness to preserve it, I would rather see it die under your name, than, under that of other, see it live long, and hope eternity for it.

"May your Highness also consider if it becomes your greatness to suffer one to punish unjustly, or at least unmercifully, who has betaken himself to the shadow of your protection, and assures himself that in the life of this little work, he will keep alive for ever his devotion to you. Without further words, I humbly kiss your hands."

Such then were the imaginations and arguments with which Tasso strove to alleviate his miserable captivity; such the addresses by which he endeavoured to find protectors and intercessors. He succeeded better in the first

of these objects than the second. "For I am as weak," he says, "in body as I can well be, without being obliged to keep my bed. But because my mind is healthy, I seem to myself better than I have been for several years."

The princes, at least the lesser Italian princes, he judges to have had too much regard or fear for the House of d'Este to be very warm or earnest in his behalf.

END OF VOL. I.

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